それでも町は廻っている

Soredemo Machi ha Mawatteiru

石黒正数
Ishiguro Masakazu

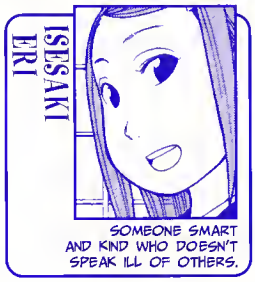
通称"それ町"

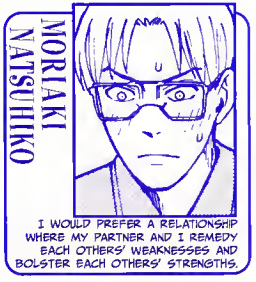
9

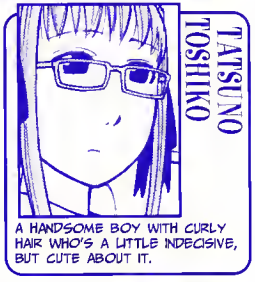
YOUNG KING COMICS

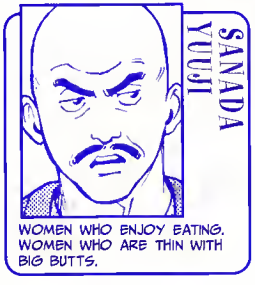
and yet the town moves
soredemo machi ha mawatte iru
presented by
asakazu ishiguro

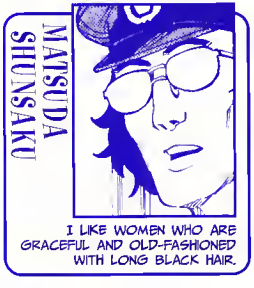
MAJOR CHARACTERS AND THEIR TASTE IN THE OPPOSITE SEX

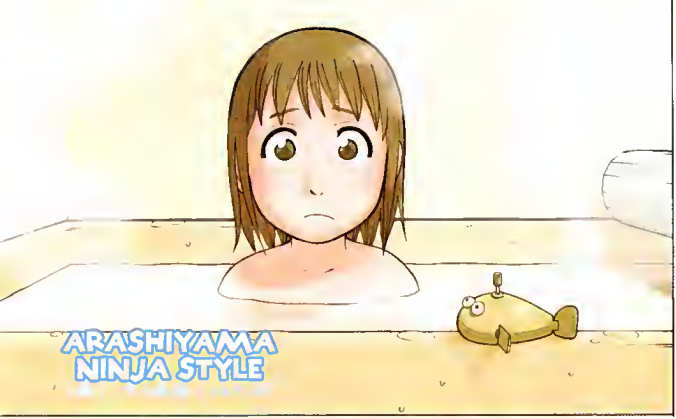


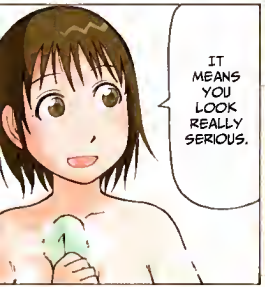

MORIAKI
NATSUHIKO
I WOULD PREFER A RELATIONSHIP WHERE MY PARTNER AND I REMEDY EACH OTHERS' WEAKNESSES AND BOLSTER EACH OTHERS' STRENGTHS.

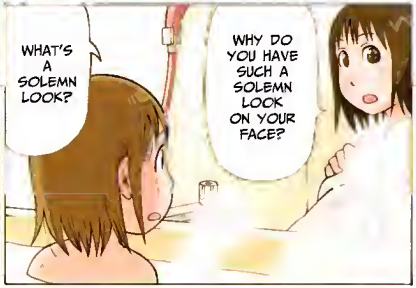


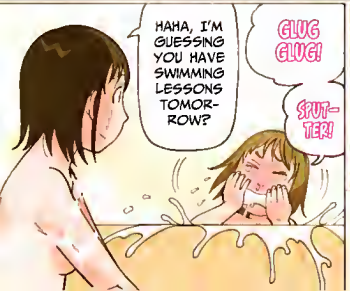




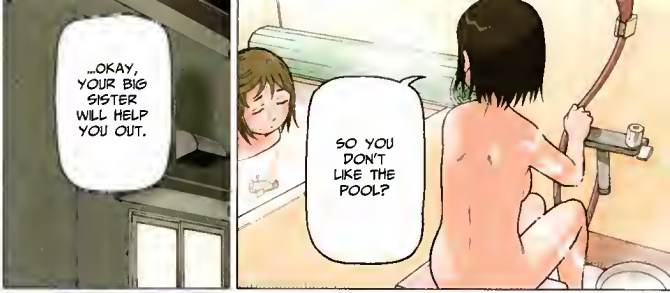

ARASHIYAMA
NINJA STYLE

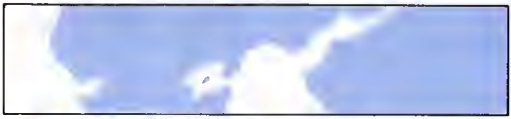

IT MEANS YOU LOOK REALLY SERIOUS.

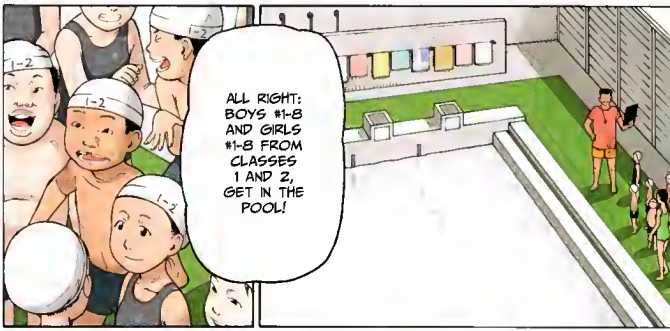

WHAT'S A SOLEMN LOOK?
WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH A SOLEMN LOOK ON YOUR FACE?

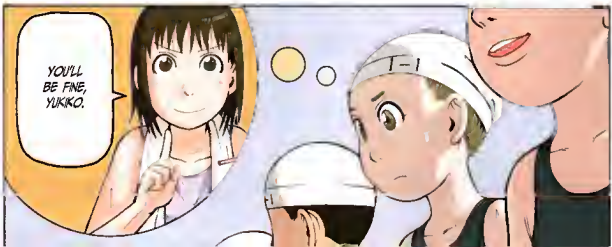

HAHA, I'M GUESSING YOU HAVE SWIMMING LESSONS TOMORROW?
GLUG GLUG!
SPUTTER!

SPLISH
トプン

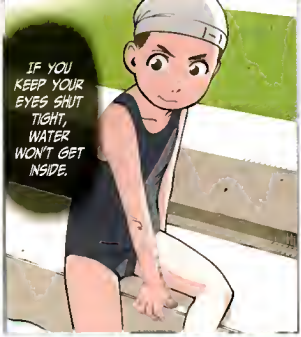

...OKAY, YOUR BIG SISTER WILL HELP YOU OUT.
SO YOU DON'T LIKE THE POOL?



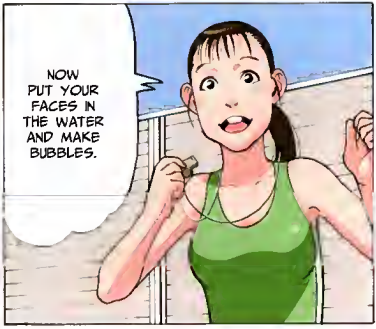

ALL RIGHT: BOYS #1-8 AND GIRLS #1-8 FROM CLASSES 1 AND 2, GET IN THE POOL!
1-2
1-2
1-2
1-2


YOU'LL BE FINE, YUKIKO.
1-1

DON'T BREATHE THROUGH YOUR NOSE! YOU WON'T CHOKE IF YOU ONLY EXHALE!

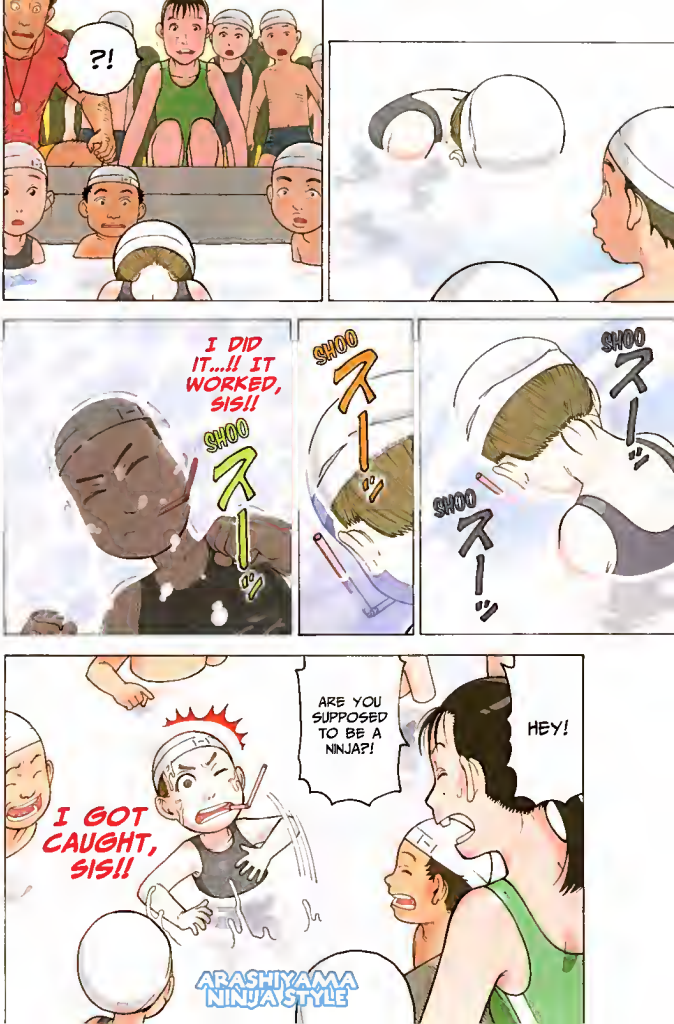

IF YOU KEEP YOUR EYES SHUT TIGHT, WATER WON'T GET INSIDE.

AND THEN...


NOW PUT YOUR FACES IN THE WATER AND MAKE BUBBLES.

GASP
ぶはーっ

BUBBLE
ブクブク
BUBBLE
ブクブク
BUBBLE


?!
I DID IT...!! IT WORKED, SIS!!
SHOO スーッ
SHOO スーッ
SHOO スーッ
SHOO スーッ
HEY!
ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE A NINJA?!
I GOT CAUGHT, SIS!!
ARASHIYAMA NINJA STYLE

YOUNG KING COMICS

AND YET, THE TOWN MOVES

それでも町は廻っている

通称"それ町"

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石黒正数
ISHIGURO MASAKAZU

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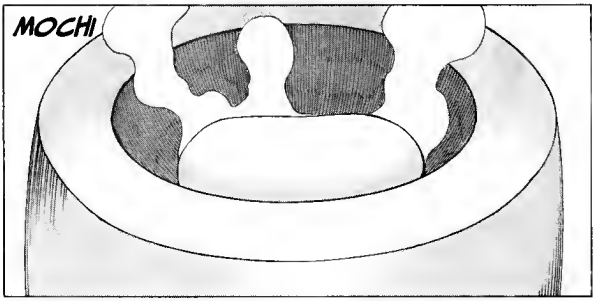
※This story is a work of fiction. None of the characters, happenings, etc. are real.

TAGS (FROM LEFT): MAKITA, ARASHIYAMA, TOSAWA

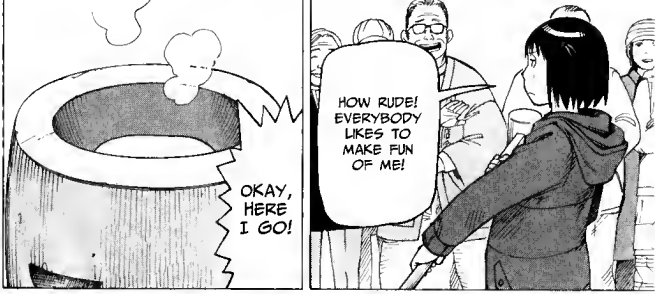
NEW YEAR'S
MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT

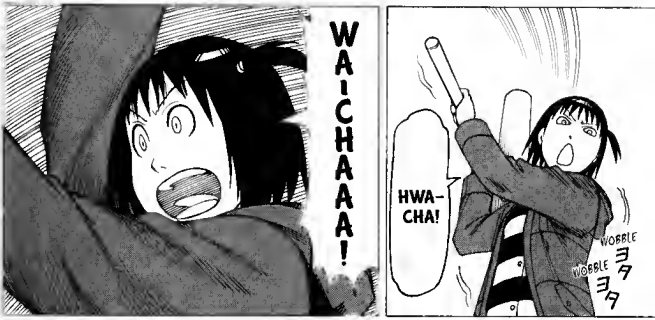

MOCHI

HOTORI

CHAPTER 66
BURN, HOTORI

FALTER
じり
じり
RUSTLE
サッ
WELL... BECAUSE... YOU'RE HOT OR!
WHY IS EVERY-ONE BACKING AWAY?


HOW RUDE! EVERYBODY LIKES TO MAKE FUN OF ME!
OKAY, HERE I GO!

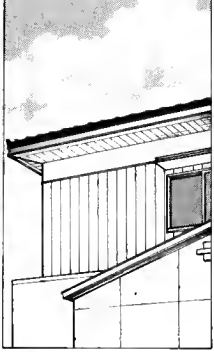

HWA-CHA!
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
WAICHAAA!

ゴ
キ
C
L
A
AA
NNA
G

WOOOO ウウー
CLANG カンカン CLANG
CLANG カン CLANG
THAT WAS CLOSE, MASUYO. YOU COULD HAVE GOTTEN HURT IF YOU HADN'T MOVED.
MY HANDS WON'T STOP SHAKING...
WOOOO ウウー
I WARNED YOU... SOMEONE HAD TO CALL A FIRE TRUCK.
SNIFF.
CLANG カンカン CLANG
ANYTHING CAN BECOME A WEAPON WHEN PLACED IN THE WRONG HANDS.
IN-DEED...

JACKET: MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT

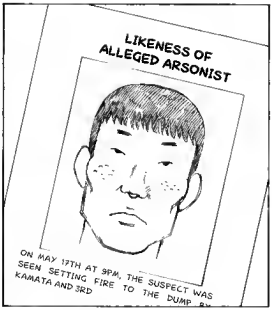
OH, THE FIRE TRUCK PASSED BY... IT WASN'T FOR US.
OBVI-OUSLY NOT!!
ANYWAY, IT FEELS LIKE I'VE BEEN HEARING FIRE TRUCKS A LOT RECENTLY.
WOOOO ウウー...
CLANG カンカン...
I NEED EVERYONE ON NIGHT WATCH TO GATHER 'ROUND.



OROSHI MOCHI: STICKY RICE CAKE SERVED WITH GRATED DAIKON RADISH.

THERE WAS A FIRE IN A PARKING LOT OF THE SHOUWA AREA...
HUH ...?
ACTU-ALLY...
I'VE COME WITH SOME BAD NEWS.
THERE HAVE BEEN MULTIPLE SUSPICIOUS FIRES RECENTLY.
YES... THAT'S WHAT WE THINK.
I'M MAKING THE ROUNDS AND TELLING EVERYONE TO BE CAREFUL.
IT APPEARS THAT IT WAS LIKELY ARSON.
SOME-ONE SET A FIRE?!
JUST TO BE SAFE, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU THIS...
TO BE SAFE...
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
SO THAT'S WHY THERE WAS A FIRE TRUCK...
FORTU-NATELY, THE FIRE ONLY DAMAGED THE ROOF OF A GARAGE.

!
THIS IS THE ARSONIST...

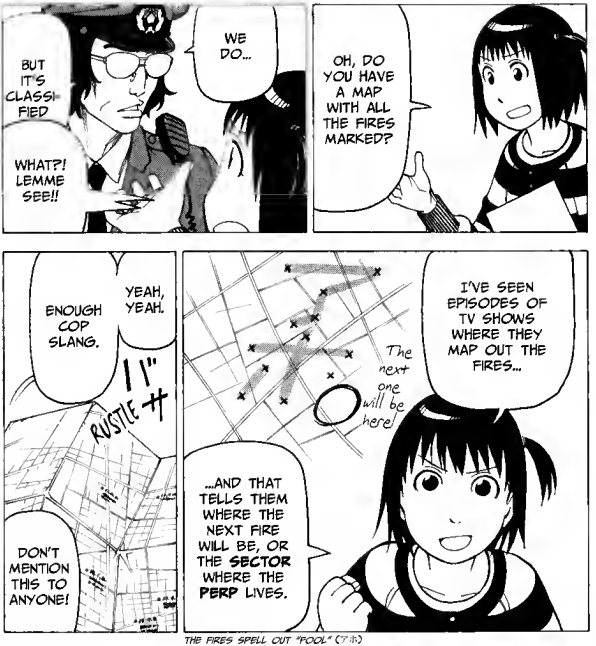

LIKENESS OF ALLEGED ARSONIST
ON MAY 17TH AT 9PM, THE SUSPECT WAS SEEN SETTING FIRE TO THE DUMP B

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?!
SEE? SEE?! THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE YOU THE PICTURE!

I'M ON PATROL TONIGHT WITH THE NIGHT WATCH.

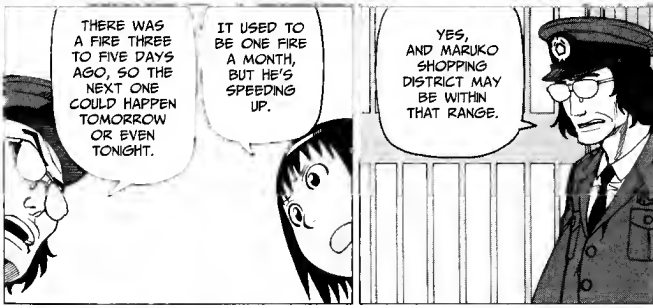
O-OKAY...
...THEN SWIFTLY, SILENTLY, SURREPTITIOUSLY CONTACT THE POLICE!
IF, BY SOME CHANCE, YOU FIND HIM...

DON'T DO ANYTHING DANGEROUS! DON'T INTERFERE!
DON'T TRY TO CATCH THE ARSONIST!


OH, DO YOU HAVE A MAP WITH ALL THE FIRES MARKED?
WE DO...
BUT IT'S CLASSIFIED
WHAT?! LEMME SEE!!
I'VE SEEN EPISODES OF TV SHOWS WHERE THEY MAP OUT THE FIRES...
The next one will be here!
...AND THAT TELLS THEM WHERE THE NEXT FIRE WILL BE, OR THE SECTOR WHERE THE PERP LIVES.
YEAH, YEAH.
ENOUGH COP SLANG.
11"
RUSTLE
DON'T MENTION THIS TO ANYONE!

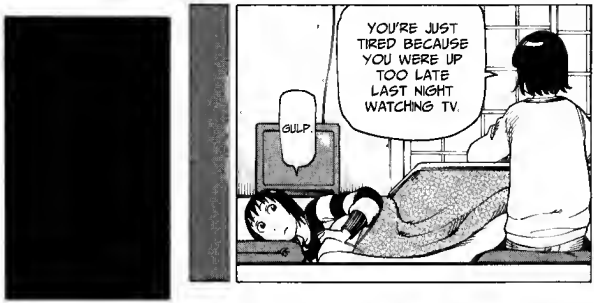
THE FIRES SPELL OUT "POOL" (7-11)

WAS THE OLDEST FIRE A YEAR AGO IN THE DRY PART OF THE TAMA RIVER?
AS FAR AS WE KNOW...
AN ABAN-DONED CAR WAS SET ON FIRE.
A MONTH LATER, IT WAS A PLAY-GROUND IN THE PARK.
AFTER THAT, IT WAS A PORTA POTTY, THEN A BIKE SEAT, THEN A DUMP...
LOOKS LIKE HE BEGAN EXPANDING HIS RANGE.


YES, AND MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT MAY BE WITHIN THAT RANGE.
IT USED TO BE ONE FIRE A MONTH, BUT HE'S SPEEDING UP.
THERE WAS A FIRE THREE TO FIVE DAYS AGO, SO THE NEXT ONE COULD HAPPEN TOMORROW OR EVEN TONIGHT.

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THIS MAP IS GOING TO HELP MUCH...
SEE? WEL-COME TO REALITY.
WELL, PATROL AWAY THEN.

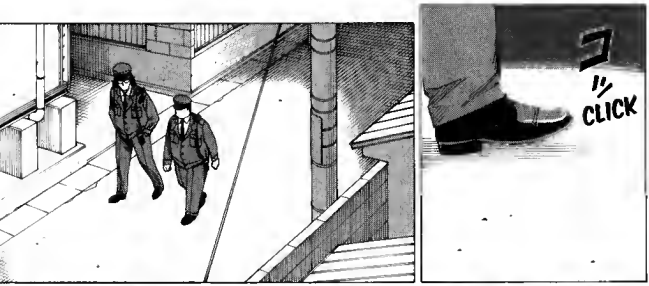
OKAY.
I'LL TAKE A NAP TO PREPARE FOR THE PATROL TONIGHT.
YAAWN


YOU'RE JUST TIRED BECAUSE YOU WERE UP TOO LATE LAST NIGHT WATCHING TV.
GULP.

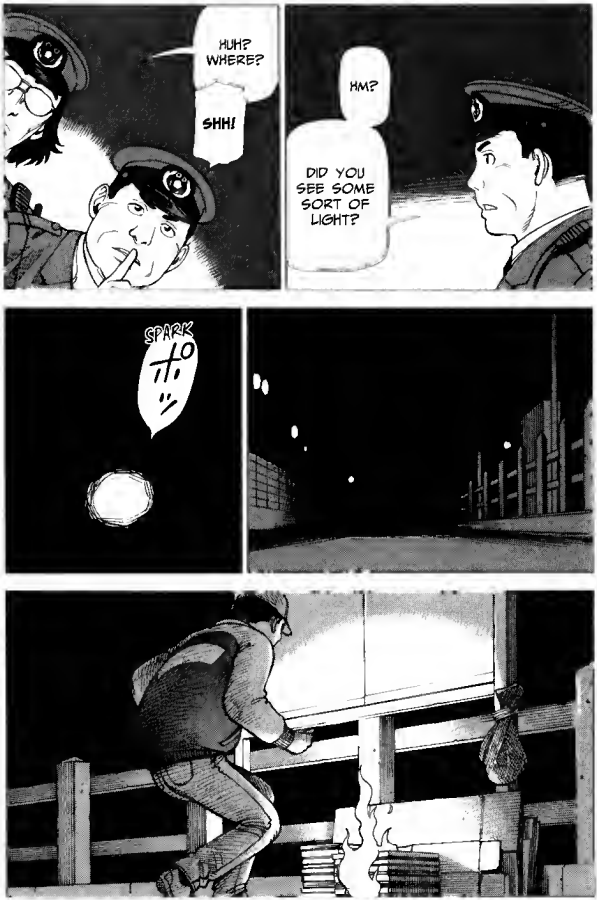
OKAY, LET'S HEAD OUT.
I'M READY TO GO.

WA-CHAAA!
LET'S BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF THIS FIRE-HAPPY BASTARD.
...WE'LL CATCH THE ARSON-IST!
OKAY! AND WHILE WE'RE ON PATROL...
YEAH!
JACKETS: MARUKO SHOPPING DISTRICT
YEAH, SHE MUST HAVE WATCHED THE BRUCE LEE MOVIE THAT WAS ON LAST NIGHT.
SHE'S BEEN MAKING FUNNY NOISES ALL DAY...
WA!
WA-TA!
SHE'S SO EASY TO READ.
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FIRES!
CLANG
カン
CLANG
カンカン
CLANG

A SINGLE MATCH AND A FIRE CAN CATCH!
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FIRE!
DON'T TURN OFF THE FIRE UNTIL EVERY-THING'S FULLY COOKED!
HOTORI-CHAN, DON'T CONFUSE PEOPLE!
CLANG CLANG カンカン
CLANG


コ
CLICK

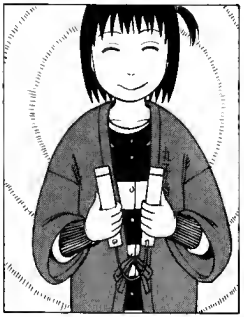
OH, SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE BUSY.
WATCH OUT FOR FIRE!
CLANG カンカン CLANG


HUH? WHERE?
SHH!
HM?
DID YOU SEE SOME SORT OF LIGHT?
SPARK

!!
HEY!
STOP!
MA-
TSUDA,
GET
HIM!
BAS-
TARD!

HEY, LET ME TRY THAT.

CLANG
CLANG
カン
カン



I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THAT TRADI-TION BEFORE!
ACCORDING TO MARUKO TRADITION, ONLY ADULTS GET TO USE THESE.

WHOA! HEY! DON'T SWING IT AROUND!!
SPIN
くる
SPIN
くる

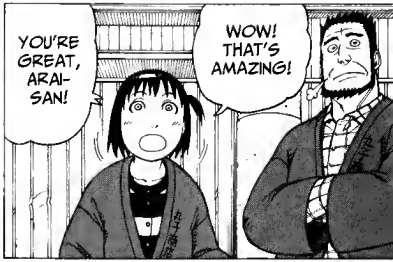
HWA-CHA!!

SHE'S PROBABLY BEEN ITCHING TO TRY THAT AFTER WATCHING THE MOVIE.
NO, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GO LIKE THIS.
OW!
WHA–
THWACK
ビシ
WHAT'S THIS?
MAN...
WANT ME TO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE?
AL-RIGHTY THEN.
YOU KNOW HOW THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE IN THE CLASS WITH A COMPLETELY WORTHLESS TALENT?
THAT'S HIM IN A NUT-SHELL...
POSE
ピタリ

SNAP
SNAP

WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHA-CHA!

I CAN GO FASTER WITH REAL NUNCHUKS!!


YOU'RE GREAT, ARAI-SAN!
WOW! THAT'S AMAZING!

OOPS.
THE STRING SNAP-PED!

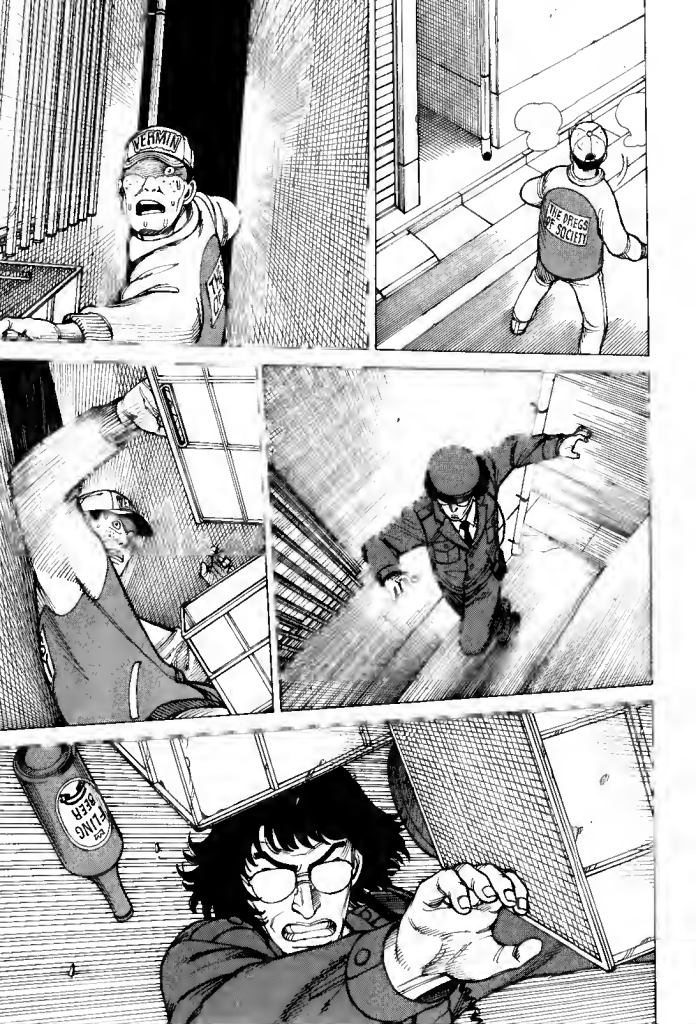
TWANG
WHOOSH

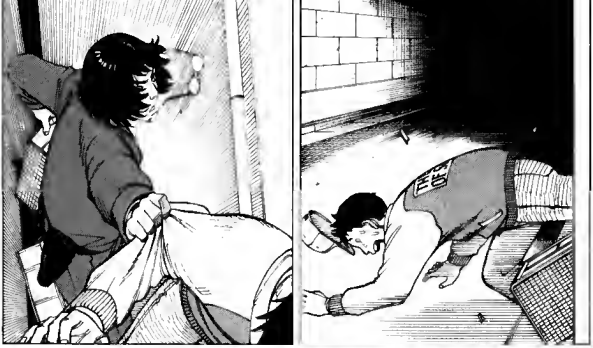
I GUESS THIS WASN'T DESIGNED TO BE SWUNG AROUND.
WHERE'D IT GO?
YOU GOT TOO COCKY.
OH, THERE IT IS.....

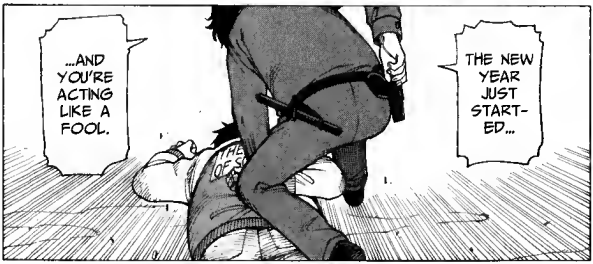
DAMN! SLIPPERY LITTLE BASTARD ...!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!

HE'S TOO DAMN FAST!

STOP RIGHT THERE, BAS-TARD!!
キキ SCREECH
HUFF!
VERMIN
HUFF!
DON'T RUN AWAY!
HUFF!
HUFF!
WAIT UP, KOBU-HEI!
VERMIN
HUFF!
HUFF!

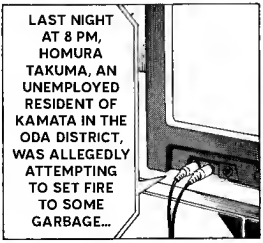

VERMIN
THE DREGS OF SOCIETY!
ELING BEER

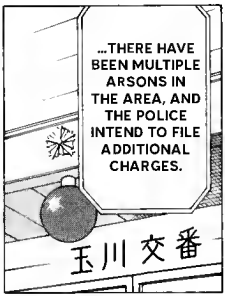



THE NEW YEAR JUST START-ED...
...AND YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A FOOL.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR ARSON. DON'T TRY TO RESIST.

NEWSPAPER: NEW YEAR


LAST NIGHT AT 8 PM, HOMURA TAKUMA, AN UNEMPLOYED RESIDENT OF KAMATA IN THE ODA DISTRICT, WAS ALLEGEDLY ATTEMPTING TO SET FIRE TO SOME GARBAGE...



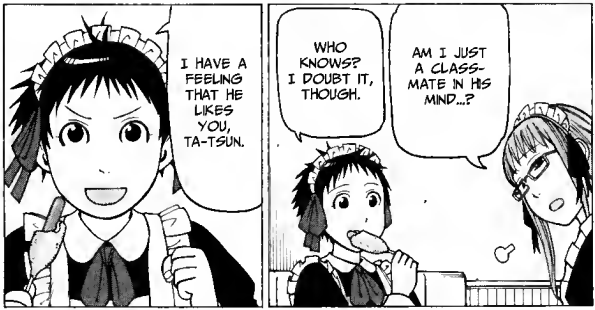
BUILDING: TAMAGAWA STATION

DID YOU LET HOTORI-CHAN AND THE BOYS KNOW THAT THE ARSONIST WAS CAUGHT?
YOU WERE LUCKY.
HE ENDED UP GETTING STUCK.
THEN HE TRIED TO PASS THROUGH A NARROW ALLEY BETWEEN HOUSES.
BUT SUDDENLY, HE FROZE IN PLACE.
THIS WAY, THEY'LL WORK HARDER.
OTHERWISE, I'LL TELL THEM AFTER THEY FINISH THEIR PATROL.
NO, THEY'LL FIND OUT WHEN THEY WATCH THE NEWS.
HOTORI-CHAN, YOU'RE GOING TO CONFUSE PEOPLE!
KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING!
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FIRE!
CLANG
カンカンカン
CLANG
CLANG

CHAPTER 66 / END

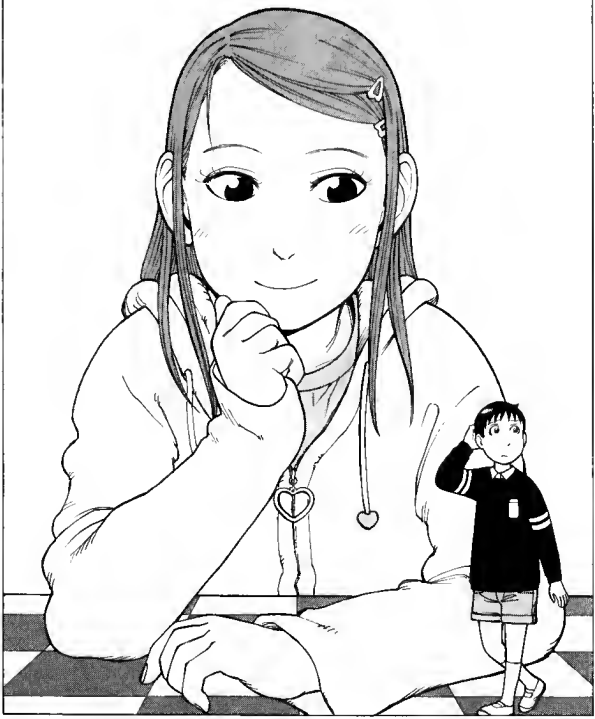
MYSTERY NOVEL
I JUST NEED A MOTIVE AND A GIMMICK TO WRITE A WHOLE NOVEL.....
DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOU'RE STARTING FROM SCRATCH?

SIGN: MAID CAFE SEASIDE

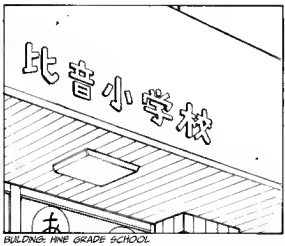


CHAPTER 67

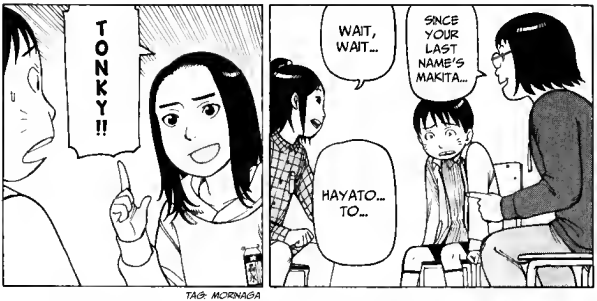
RETURN JEALOUS LOOK



SIGN: CLASS 4-3

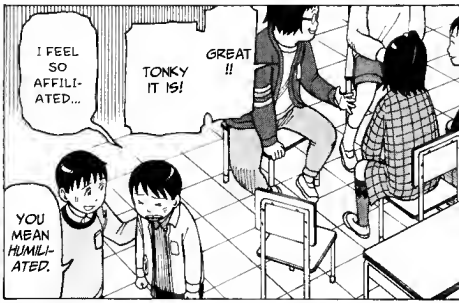


BUILDING: HINE GRADE SCHOOL

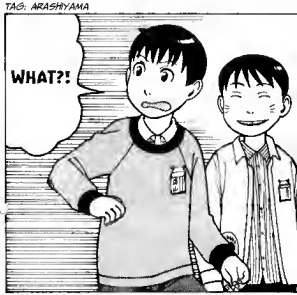


TAG: MORINAGA

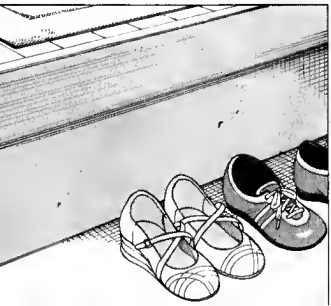
TAG: NEGISHI

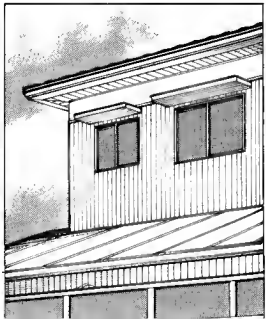


TAG: ARASHIYAMA



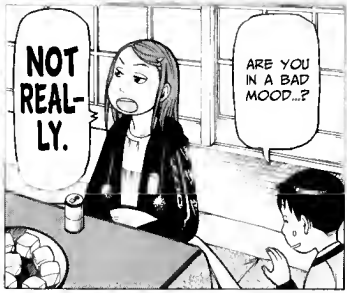
WALL: KINDNESS





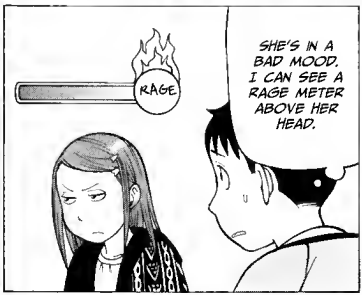
JUMP
ビク

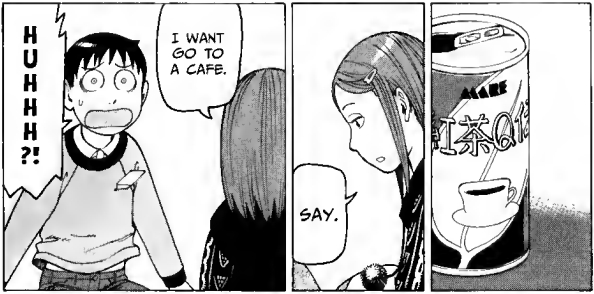
RASSIE.


NOT REAL-LY.
ARE YOU IN A BAD MOOD...?

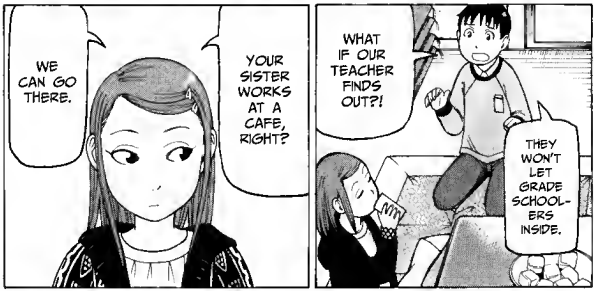
WASN'T IT NICE OF THEM TO GIVE YOU A NICK-NAME?
IN A BITING TONE

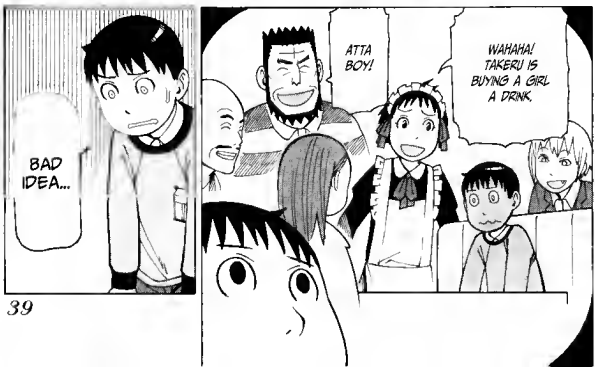
WHAT DO I DO...
BUT SHE NEVER TELLS ME WHY SHE'S UPSET.

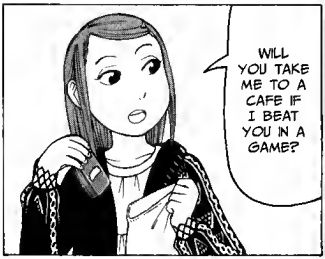

RAGE
SHE'S IN A BAD MOOD. I CAN SEE A RAGE METER ABOVE HER HEAD.


HUHHHH?!
I WANT GO TO A CAFE.
SAY.
AKARE
紅茶

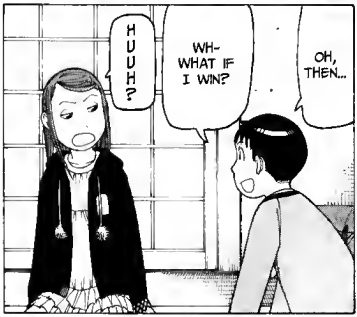
CAN: TEA


WE CAN GO THERE.
YOUR SISTER WORKS AT A CAFE, RIGHT?
WHAT IF OUR TEACHER FINDS OUT?!
THEY WON'T LET GRADE SCHOOLERS INSIDE.

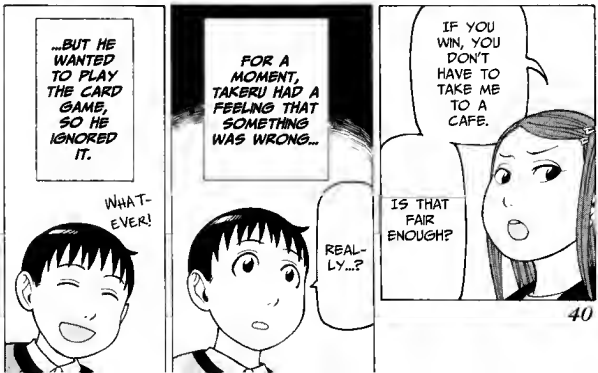

BAD IDEA...
ATTA BOY!
WAHAHA! TAKERU IS BUYING A GIRL A DRINK.


WILL YOU TAKE ME TO A CAFE IF I BEAT YOU IN A GAME?

OKAY...

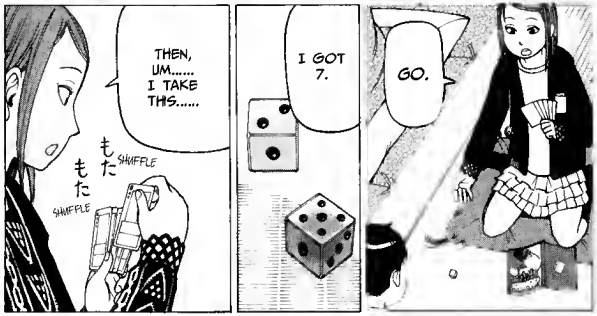

HUUH?
WH-WHAT IF I WIN?
OH, THEN...

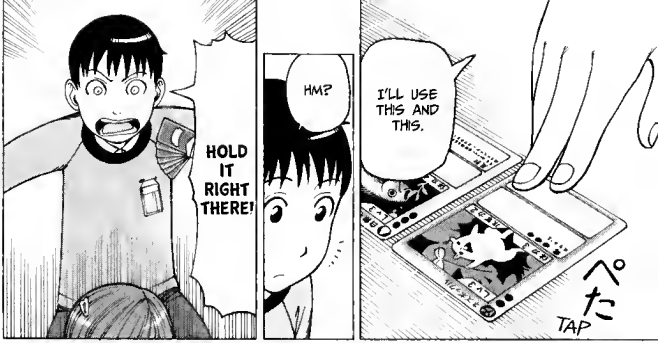
AH!
DEMON COLOS-SEUM CARDS !!


IF YOU WIN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ME TO A CAFE.
IS THAT FAIR ENOUGH?
REAL-LY...?
FOR A MOMENT, TAKERU HAD A FEELING THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG...
...BUT HE WANTED TO PLAY THE CARD GAME, SO HE IGNORED IT.
WHAT-EVER!

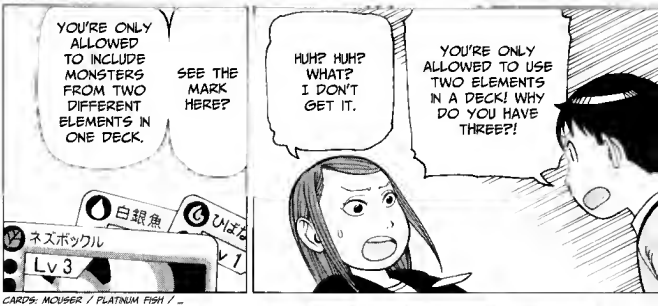
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME, SO CAN I USE THE GUIDE?
SURE, AND YOU CAN GO FIRST.
I GET TO TEST THE DECK THAT I PUT TOGETHER FOR DEALING WITH YAMAMOTO-KUN.

BOOK: DEMON COLOSSEUM GUIDEBOOK

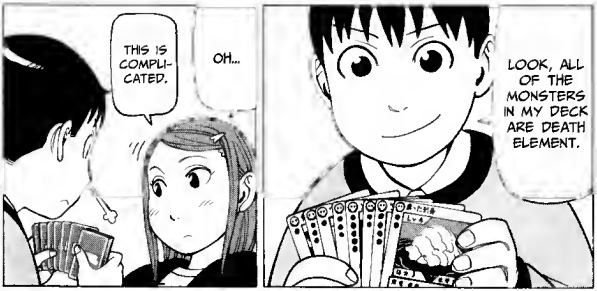




CARD: MOUSER


YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO INCLUDE MONSTERS FROM TWO DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN ONE DECK.
SEE THE MARK HERE?
白銀魚
ネズボックル
Lv 3
HUH? HUH? WHAT? I DON'T GET IT.
YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO USE TWO ELEMENTS IN A DECK! WHY DO YOU HAVE THREE?!

CARDS: MOUSER / PLATINUM FISH / ...



FRONT CARD: ROTTEN SASHIMI

BOX: ESCAPE FROM BATHORY

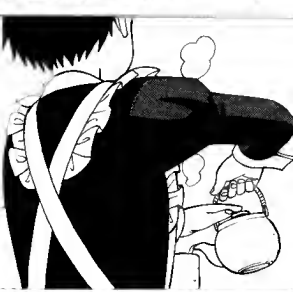
AT FIRST GLANCE, YOU WOULD SEE THREE CHILDREN AT PLAY. HOWEVER...
WHEIN!
SURE, WE CAN PLAY TO-GETHER.
ニコ
SMILE
GO AWAY!
AHH...
YUKIKO COULD SEE SOME-THING ELSE.
THE VISUAL MANIFESTATION OF A WOMAN'S TRUE NATURE. A WOMAN'S TRUE NATURE CAN ONLY BE SEEN BY OTHER WOMEN. IN SOME CASES, A MAN'S TRUE NATURE CAN ALSO BE SEEN BY CERTAIN WOMEN, SO BE CAREFUL.
HUH?
I THINK I'LL CLEAN UP MY ROOM INSTEAD.

I'M HOME.
YOU'RE EARLY TODAY.
I'LL GO BACK TO THE CAFE LATER.
I WAS JUST TRYING TO BE CONSIDERATE, SINCE SANADA SHOWED UP.
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
OH...?
THERE'S A FAINT TRACE OF DIFFERENT SHAMPOO IN THE HOUSE...
DID EBI-CHAN DROP BY?
IS SHE A BLOODHOUND?!
SHIVER

...THAT MEANS YOU GOT INTO A FIGHT AND SHE LEFT?
WE DIDN'T FIGHT! WE PLAYED A GAME, I WON, AND SHE GOT MAD AND LEFT.

AND IF SHE'S ALREADY GONE...

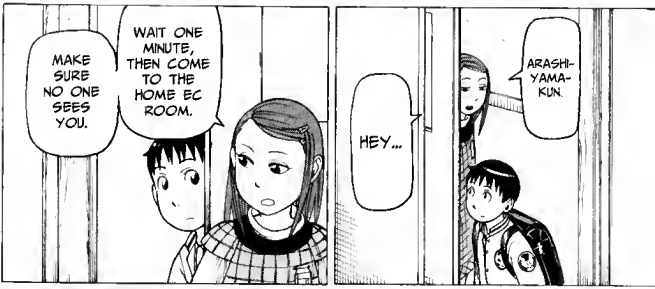
THIS IS GREAT.
I USED A DECK THAT WAS BUILT FOR PLAYING YAMAMOTO-KUN AND WON WITHOUT TAKING ANY DAMAGE... HEHEH.
CACKLE
THIS IS A BEAST DECK IF I CAN LAND CURSE, WICKED MAN AND BONE GOLEM SUCCESSIVELY...



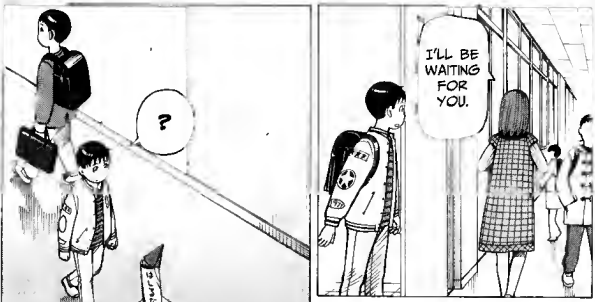
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT EBI-CHAN?

.....
TAKERU...

.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN..?
IS SHE JUST A CLASS-MATE?
DO YOU CONSIDER HER ONLY A FRIEND?
WELL...
OR DOES SHE MEAN MORE ...?
I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER RIGHT NOW.
AND IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
WHY ARE MEN SO...
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
SIP
ズズー



CONE: NO RUNNING



WHAT?
I'LL LOOK AT IT WHEN I GET HOME.
LOOK AT IT NOW!
OH, IS THAT THE CATALOG YOU MODEL FOR?
LOOK AT THIS.
...A NEW ISSUE!
Filly
FILLY STYLE SPRING
BUT...
WHAT IF SOME-ONE COMES ...?
LOOK! THIS OUTFIT IS REALLY CUTE.
1977

GRRRRRR...
むっ
かぁ
あ～
WHY AM I SO MAD?!
??
I CAN'T CONTROL MY ANGER!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

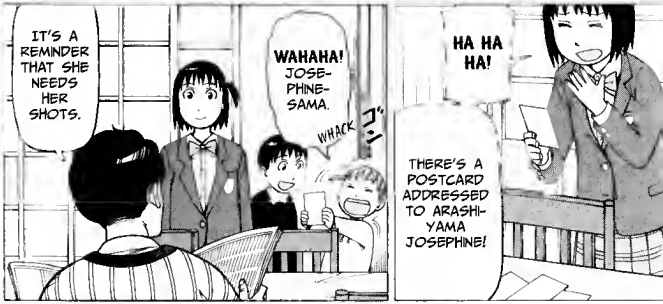
ARE YOU ANGRY?
WHAT'S WRONG?
OH?
AH!
NO!
HOME-ROOM'S STARTING SOON, SO I'M GOING.
HEL-LO?!
ARE YOU IN A BAD MOOD?!
Filly
...INDUSTRIES WHICH ARE TAILORED TO LOCAL SPECIAL-TIES...
4年3組

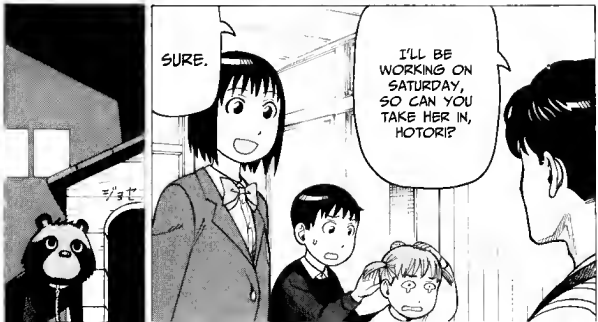
CHAPTER 67 / END

CHAPTER 68

ARASHIYAMA JOSEPHINE-SAMA

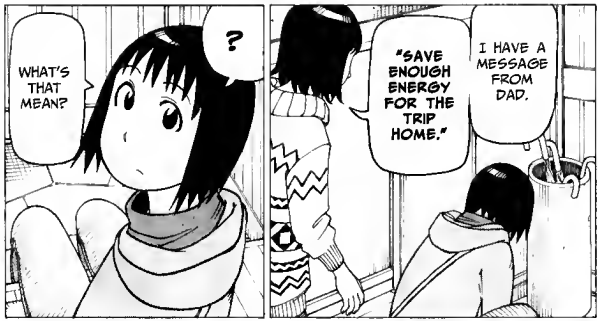
POSTCARD: MARIKO, OTA / ARASHIYAMA JOSEPHINE-SAMA / ANIMAL HOSPITAL

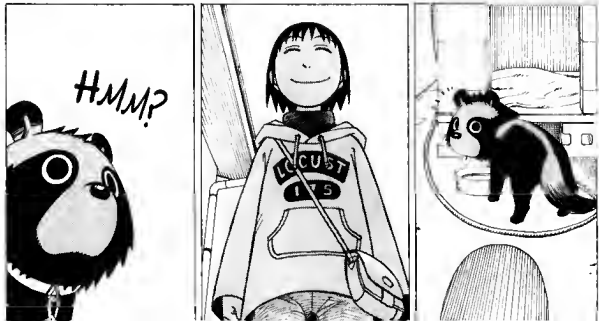




HOTORI ISN'T HERE TODAY...?
HUH...?
RATTLE
カラン
RATTLE
カラン
メイ
MAYBE HUMAN ONES DON'T WORK ON HER?
WHY DOES SHE NEED DOG SHOTS...?
SHE NEEDED TO GET HER DOG SHOTS.
TSK, SHE GOT ME.
SO WAS I.
...I WAS JUST JOKING...

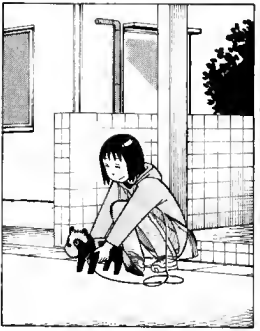
WELL, I'M OFF TO GET JOSIE HER SHOTS.
HO-TORI!


I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM DAD.
"SAVE ENOUGH ENERGY FOR THE TRIP HOME."
?
WHAT'S THAT MEAN?


HMM?
LOCUST
175

THIS ISN'T THE USUAL COURSE.
THIS ISN'T THE USUAL TIME.
...?
WHINE
フンフーン
HEY, WALK STRAIGHT!
I'M GETTING EXCITED !!
兄丸動物病院
BUILDING: ANIMARU ANIMAL HOSPITAL
SIGN: RECEPTION
HUH—?
HUH?
受付

HUHHHH?



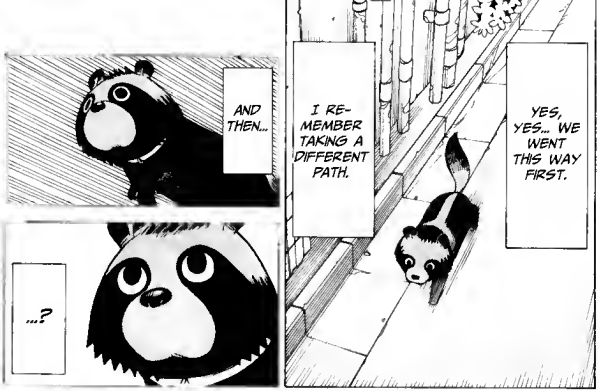
フーン
YIP!
兄丸動物病院

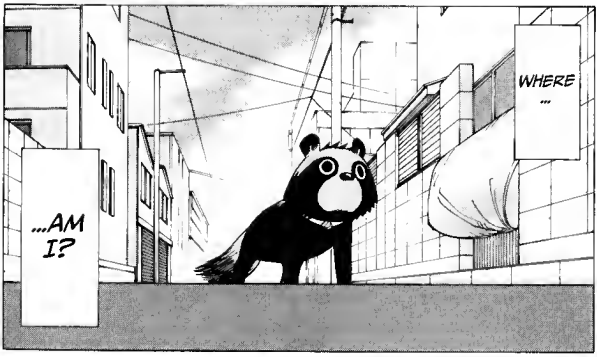
THANK YOU FOR BEHAVING YOURSELF, JOSIE.

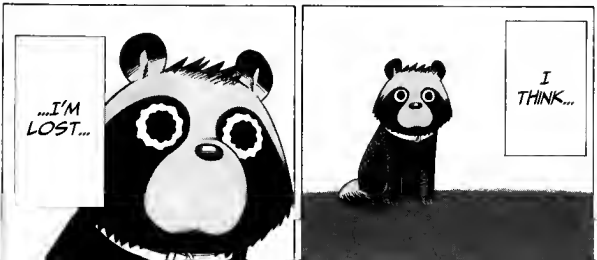
?
SHE'S FROZEN STIFF!!
SO DAD MEANT TO SAVE ENERGY FOR CARRYING HER HOME...
ANIMALS ARE A LOT HEAVIER THAN YOU REALIZE...

AH! WHERE AM I?!
YES, I WENT FOR A WALK WITH HER...
WHAT WAS I DOING?

I HAVE A FEELING THAT SOMETHING TERRIFYING HAPPENED...
I CAN'T REMEMBER...
(SHE) MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN IT!
MY CHAIN IS GONE!
HUH?
I MUST SEEK MY LOST MEMORIES.

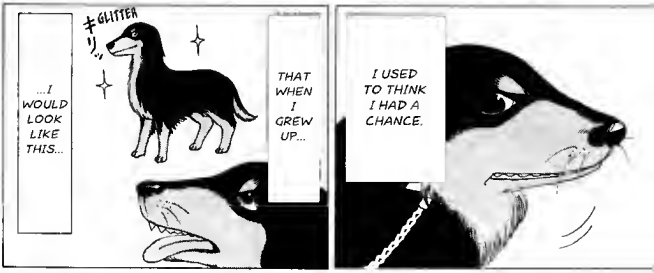

YES, YES... WE WENT THIS WAY FIRST.
I RE-MEMBER TAKING A DIFFERENT PATH.
AND THEN...
...?

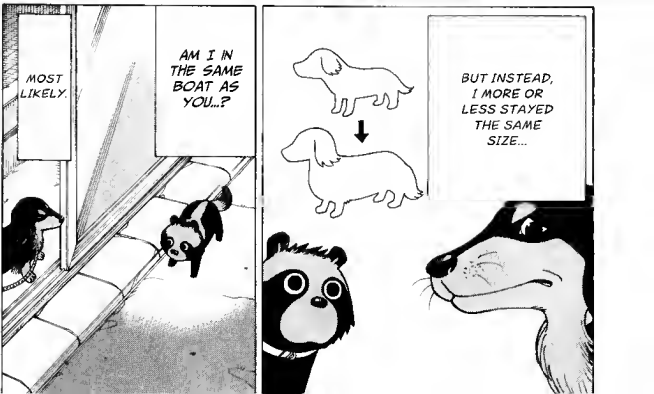

WHERE ...
...AM I?


I THINK...
...I'M LOST...

EX-CUSE ME...
WHERE IS MY HOME?
I have no idea...
BARK
You came from that direction, so it must be that way.
I WONDER IF MY LEGS WILL EVER GET THAT LONG.
IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...
THAT DOG LOOKED PRETTY COOL...

?!

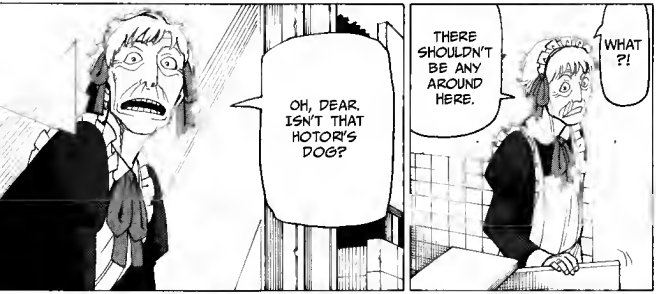

GLITTER
キリ…
...I WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS...
THAT WHEN I GREW UP...
I USED TO THINK I HAD A CHANCE.


MOST LIKELY.
AM I IN THE SAME BOAT AS YOU...?
BUT INSTEAD, I MORE OR LESS STAYED THE SAME SIZE...

キリッ
GLITTER
I DON'T THINK SO...
REAL-LY...?
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF DOGS OUT THERE.

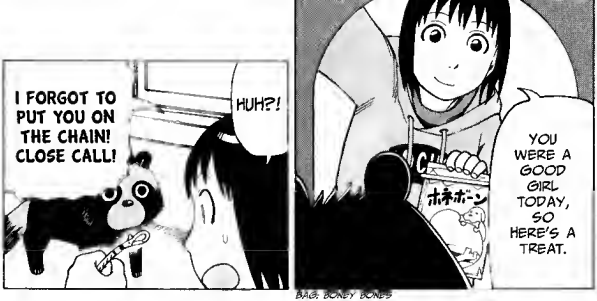
HIS LEGS WON'T GET ANY LONGER.
フーン
WHINE
THAT DOG IS REALLY ROTUND.
IS THAT ME?!
...?!
メイド
喫茶
シーサイド
OH! THIS IS A PLACE THAT I RECOG-NIZE!
メイド
喫茶
シーサイド

POSTER: LUNCHTIME COFFEE

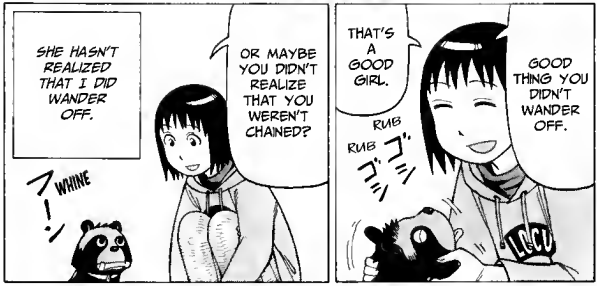


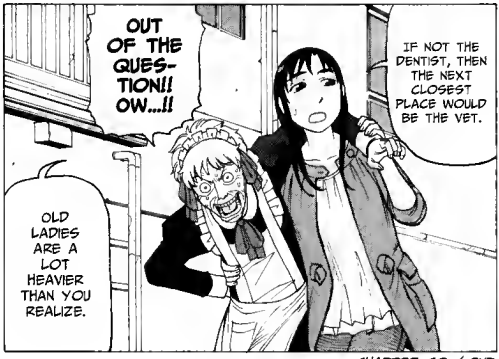
COME HERE.
WAIT.
バタバタ
STEP STEP
?!
I JUST WANT TO GO HOME.
WHOO フワー
WHAT'S GOING ON? ARE THEY TRYING TO CATCH ME?!
COME HERE!!
I WON'T LET THIS SLOW PERSON CATCH ME.
ゴチ SMACK

YOU DIDN'T DO IT.
I DID IT!
WHAAAT?
I CAN'T STAND UP!
S-SOME-THING'S WRONG WITH MY BACK...
I'VE DONE IT NOW...
N-NO...



BAG: BONEY BONES


SHE HASN'T REALIZED THAT I DID WANDER OFF.
OR MAYBE YOU DIDN'T REALIZE THAT YOU WEREN'T CHAINED?
WHINE
THAT'S A GOOD GIRL.
RUB
RUB
GOOD THING YOU DIDN'T WANDER OFF.

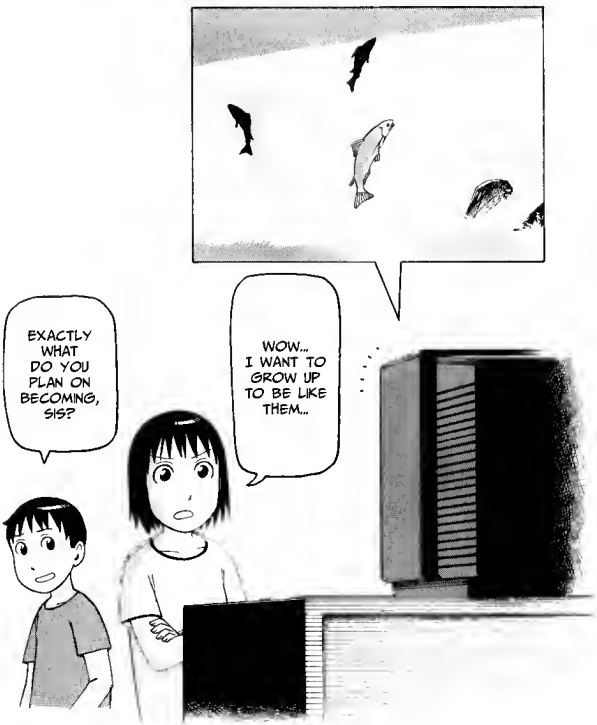

OUT OF THE QUES-TION!! OW...!!
IF NOT THE DENTIST, THEN THE NEXT CLOSEST PLACE WOULD BE THE VET.
OLD LADIES ARE A LOT HEAVIER THAN YOU REALIZE.

CHAPTER 68 / END

WHINE
フーン

HISSY FIT

TROUT JUMPING UPSTREAM



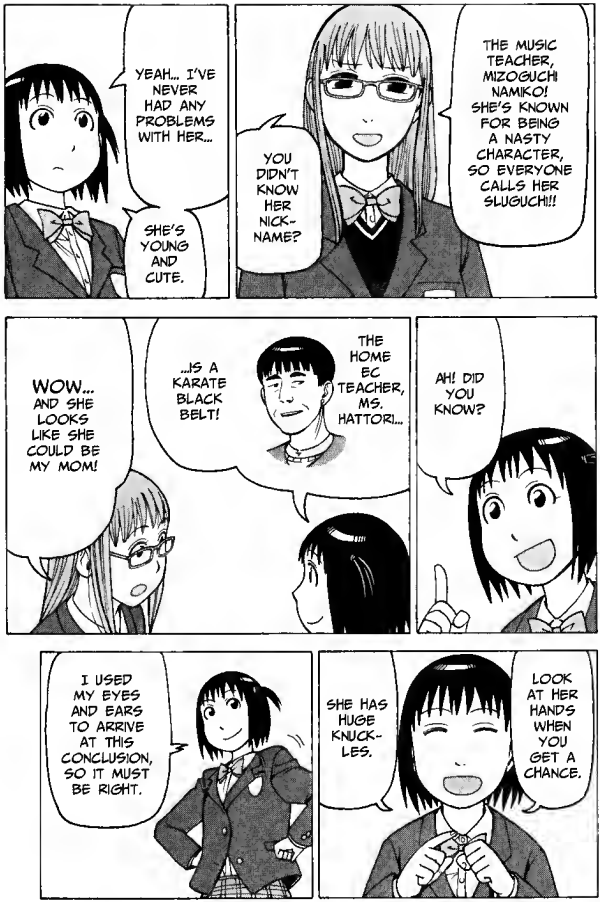
I MADE A HUGE MISTAKE.
UH OH... I'M GOING TO PASS OUT.
I NEED TO CALL SOME-ONE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.....
DRIP DRIP
ポタ
ポタ

CHAPTER 69

BLEEDING PROCESS

BOOKS: TANK GRANDPA BY FUJIYAMA KEIGO

WHY DID I HAVE TO GET CAUGHT DURING MUSIC...?
OW-WWW!
—I COULD TOTALLY SEE SLUGUCHI (MS. MIZOGUCHI) DOING THAT.
OH...
NOW HE HAS TO GET HIS MANGA BACK AFTER CLASS.
WHAT HAPPENED TO SANADA?
HE GOT CAUGHT READING MANGA DURING CLASS.
SLUG-UCHI...?
AND HE'S UP AGAINST SLUGUCHI.


THE MUSIC TEACHER, MIZOGUCHI NAMIKO! SHE'S KNOWN FOR BEING A NASTY CHARACTER, SO EVERYONE CALLS HER SLUGUCHI!!
YOU DIDN'T KNOW HER NICK-NAME?
YEAH... I'VE NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH HER...
SHE'S YOUNG AND CUTE.
AH! DID YOU KNOW?
THE HOME EC TEACHER, MS. HATTORI...
...IS A KARATE BLACK BELT!
WOW... AND SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE COULD BE MY MOM!
LOOK AT HER HANDS WHEN YOU GET A CHANCE.
SHE HAS HUGE KNUCK-LES.
I USED MY EYES AND EARS TO ARRIVE AT THIS CONCLUSION, SO IT MUST BE RIGHT.

EXCUSE...
...ME.
UGH... INSTEAD OF SLUGUCHI...
...I GET THE CYBORG...
UH... WHERE'S MS. MIZOGUCHI...?
OH, YOUR MANGA?
MS. MIZOGUCHI HAD SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF, SO I'VE GOT IT HERE.
THE RULES SAY THAT YOU SHOULDN'T BRING MANGA TO SCHOOL.
DIS-POSE.
AH-HHH!
SHRED

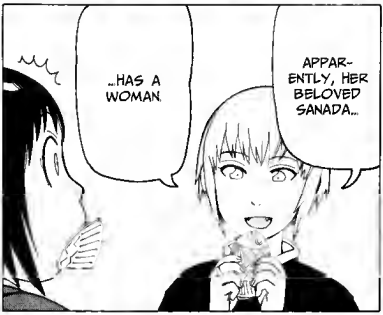
UH...
I'M SORRY...
I WENT AHEAD AND READ YOUR MANGA.
IT WAS VERY INTEREST-ING.
IS THERE ANY MORE TO THIS SERIES?
YES... THERE ARE SIX VOLUMES OUT.
EXCELLENT! I'LL READ THE REST WHEN I GET A CHANCE...
BY THE WAY, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
ER... IT WON'T BE INTERESTING IF I TELL YOU.
TRUE. IF YOU HAD SPOILED ANYTHING FOR ME...
...I WOULDN'T BE RETURNING YOUR MANGA.

THREE DAYS LATER...

SIGN: COFFEE SEASIDE

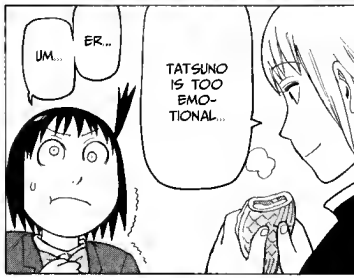
MAID! THIS IS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DIFFICULTY.
I MADE THIS YESTER-DAY.
THERE! IF YOU LEAVE IT LIKE THIS FOR A WHILE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO IT!
...THEN PUT THE LID ON AND TAPE IT UP...
IF YOU PUT YOUR HAND IN HERE...
BOX: MIZU YOKAN (A SWEET JELLIED DESSERT)
WHACK
I CALL THIS THE MAID'S TRAINING BRACE.

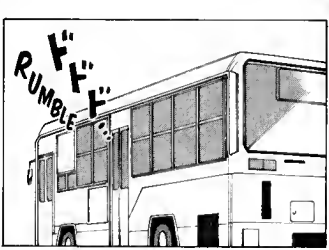
DID YOU NOTICE HOW TATSUNO WAS IN A BAD MOOD TODAY?

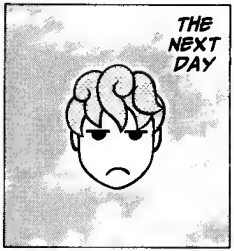

..HAS A WOMAN.
APPAR-ENTLY, HER BELOVED SANADA...

WE WERE ON THE SAME BUS THIS MORNING...
..SO I ASKED.

WHO IS IT?!
ARE YOU SERI-OUS?!


UM...
ER...
TATSUNO IS TOO EMO-TIONAL...

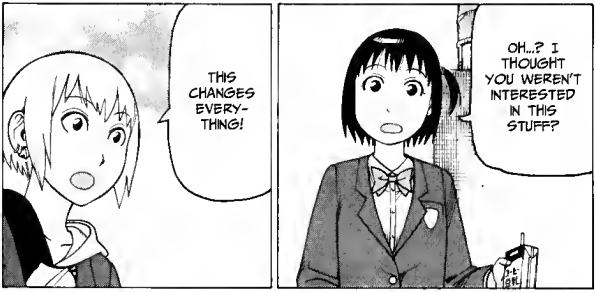




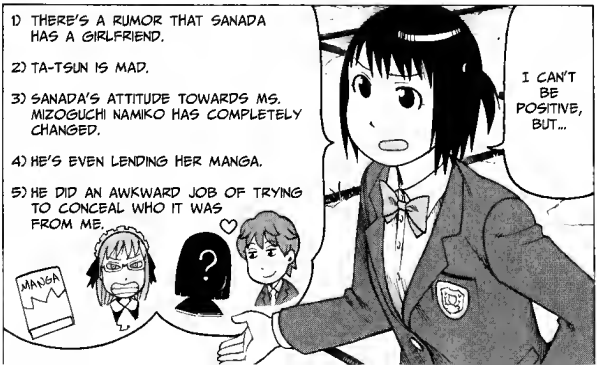
BOOK: TANK GRANDPA

HMM...?
SANADA
ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH SOME-ONE?
.....
YOU MEAN IN A BOYFRIEND-GIRLFRIEND SORT OF WAY...?
AD'S: KATA LAW FIRM / BUSINESS HOTEL STRAIN
WHAT ELSE WOULD I BE TALKING ABOUT?
H-HERE IT COMES!!
THIS IS THE MOMENT I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT—

I-I'M NOT GOING OUT WITH ANYONE.
IS SHE LEADING UP TO THE SHY AND NATURAL CONFESSION?
WELCOME
IF YOU AREN'T GOING OUT WITH ANYONE RIGHT NOW, I'LL VOLUNTEER.
I SEE... YOU BROUGHT MANGA WITH YOU AGAIN... YOU REALIZE THE TEACHER'S GOING TO TAKE IT AWAY?
DID I SOUND WEIRD?!
NO... I'M ACTUALLY LENDING THIS TO A TEACHER.
HUH? WHAT HAPPENED TO HER CONFES-SION...?



CARTON: COFFEE SOYMILK

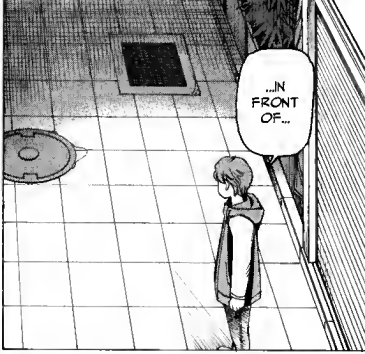

1) THERE'S A RUMOR THAT SANADA HAS A GIRLFRIEND.
2) TA-TSUN IS MAD.
3) SANADA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MS. MIZOGUCHI NAMIKO HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED.
4) HE'S EVEN LENDING HER MANGA.
5) HE DID AN AWKWARD JOB OF TRYING TO CONCEAL WHO IT WAS FROM ME.
MANGA
?
I CAN'T BE POSITIVE, BUT...

...SO, AS HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH EVIDENCE FOR A TABLOID TO RUN THE STORY!
WE'RE TALKING TEACHER-STUDENT TABOO HERE!
...YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING TO CHEER HER UP... WE DON'T HAVE SCHOOL TOMORROW.
ANYWAY, AS FOR TATSU-NO...
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT ALL RELATION-SHIPS...
...BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ARE DOOMED TO FAIL...
ISN'T IT FOR THEM TO DECIDE?
YEP, YOU COULD BUY HER SOME CAKE.
SHE MIGHT QUIT.
YES, SHE STARTED WORKING AT SEASIDE BECAUSE OF SANADA-KUN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
.....
.....
...SUP-PORT WHAT?
LUGWORM
AFTER SOME THINKING, I'VE DECIDED TO SUP-PORT YOU.
YOU'RE GOING OUT WITH MS. MIZOGUCHI, RIGHT?
CHOKE
ブ
ー
ッ
YOU DON'T NEED TO HIDE IT.
I'VE FIGURED EVERY-THING OUT.

I TOLD YOU THIS MORNING THAT I'M NOT GOING OUT WITH ANYONE!
WHO ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH?
I'D NEVER GO OUT WITH SUGUCHI.
NO, NO...
HUH?
.....
INSTEAD, SERIZAWA WAS...
...
WHEN I WENT TO GET BACK MY MANGA, SUGUCHI WASN'T THERE.
THE MANGA WAS FOR MR. SERIZAWA.
BUT YOU'RE LENDING MS. MIZOGUCHI YOUR MANGA...
THAT PERSON IS...
... RIGHT ...
AND...
THERE'S SOMEONE I LIKE.
BESIDES ...
WELL ...

YEP, I KNEW THAT SHE WAS ALREADY GONE.
AND I STILL COULDN'T SAY IT...


...IN FRONT OF...

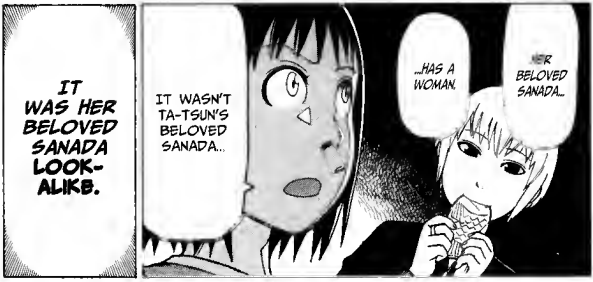
THIS IS VERY STRANGE.
ボリ CRUNCH
ボリ CRUNCH

HUH?
THAT'S ODD...

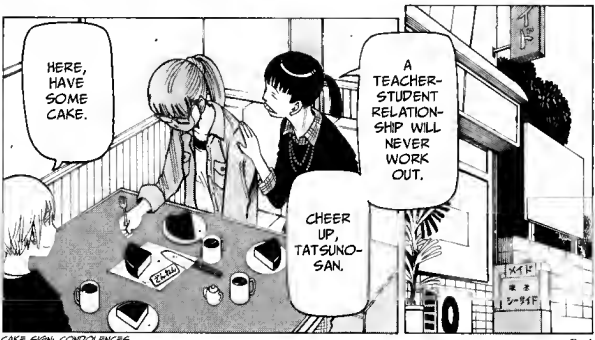
I ATE SOME CHOCO-LATE TO JUICE UP MY BRAIN.
A WARM BATH WILL ALSO HELP THE BLOOD FLOW UP THERE.
WHY DOESN'T THIS MAKE SENSE...?
SOMEONE MUST HAVE GIVEN ME FAULTY INFORMATION...
WHO WAS IT...?

?!
JERK
ガバッ
WHAT TIME IS IT?!
CELL PHONE!
YOU FAINTED WHILE TAKING A BATH AND GOT A NOSE-BLEED.
WH-WHERE AM I?! OH, MOM.
YOU FOR-GOT?
IF MY GUESS IS COR-RECT...
CLICK
カチ
カチ
カチ
CLICK
CLICK
HOW DO I ACCESS THE INTERNET WITH MY PHONE?
CAN YOU PULL IT TOGETHER?! YOU ALMOST DIED RIGHT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE LAST TIME; NOW YOU ALMOST DIED INSIDE...

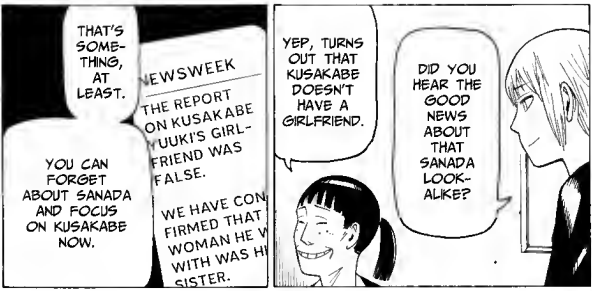
THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED!
THIS WAS THE PROBLEM!
THERE WE GO...
NEWSWEEK
THE STAR ACTOR KUSAKABE YUUKI WAS CAUGHT SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL!
KUSAKABE YUUKI (22)

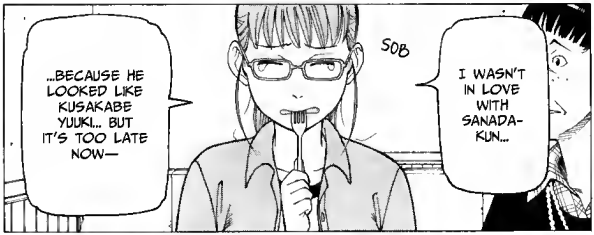

IT WAS HER BELOVED SANADA LOOK-ALIKE.
IT WASN'T TA-TSUN'S BELOVED SANADA..
...HAS A WOMAN.
HER BELOVED SANADA...

TA-TSUN WAS UPSET BECAUSE THERE'S A RUMOR THAT HE HAS A GIRLFRIEND!
IT WAS THE SANADA LOOK-ALIKE ACTOR TA-TSUN HAS A CRUSH ON...



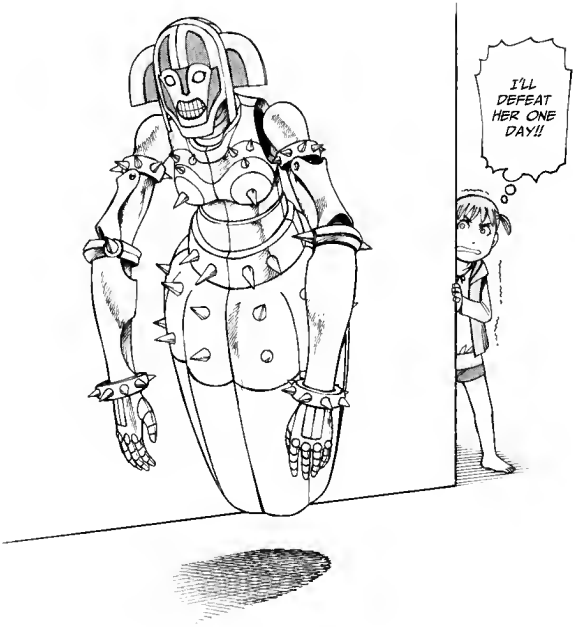
CAKE SIGN: CONDOLENCES


DID YOU HEAR THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THAT SANADA LOOK-ALIKE?
YEP, TURNS OUT THAT KUSAKABE DOESN'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND.
NEWSWEEK
THE REPORT ON KUSAKABE YUUKI'S GIRL-FRIEND WAS FALSE.
WE HAVE CON FIRMED THAT WOMAN HE V WITH WAS H SISTER.
THAT'S SOME-THING, AT LEAST.
YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT SANADA AND FOCUS ON KUSAKABE NOW.



CHAPTER 69 / END

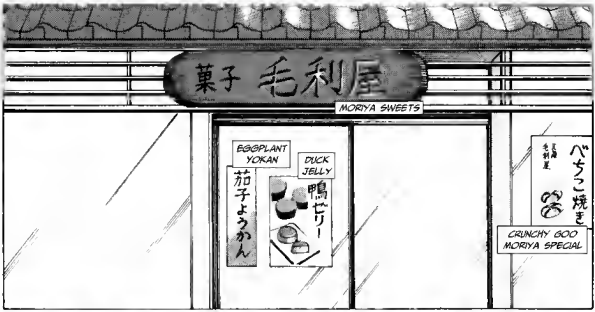
IRON MAIDEN



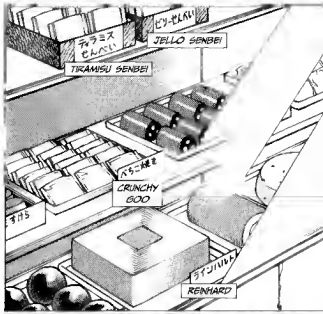
CHAPTER 70

IMPULSE BUYING LIKE A BOSS

BAG: GREEN MARKET / BAR: NASTICK, TWO EGGPLANTS OF ENERGY, SOYBEAN FLAVOR

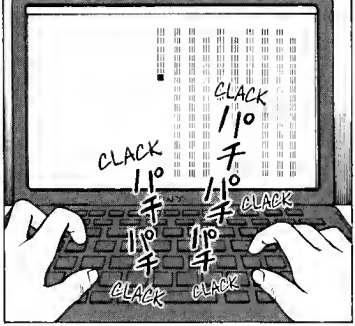

菓子 毛利屋
MORIYA SWEETS
EGGPLANT YOKAN
茄子ようかん
DUCK JELLY
鴨ゼリー
べちこ焼き
CRUNCHY GOO MORIYA SPECIAL

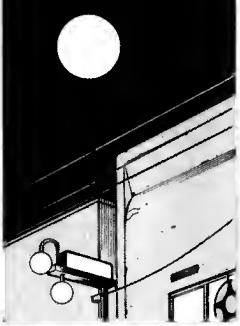
I WANTED TO HAVE SOME BEFORE I LEFT...
WEL-COME.


JELLO SENBEI
TIRAMISU SENBEI
CRUNCHY GOO
REINHARD

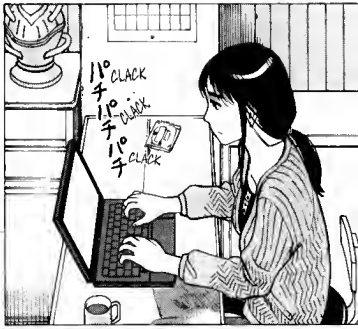
THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'LL BE CLOSING UP SHOP AT THE END OF THE MONTH.

WHAT ...?!
MY MOTHER AND I ARE BOTH FANS...
PERHAPS IT'S THE COLOR... THEY DON'T SELL WELL...
THAT CAN'T BE...
THAT MEANS...
I'LL GO THE REST OF MY LIFE WITHOUT ONE...
GIVE ME EVERY SINGLE ONE YOU HAVE!
!


CLACK
パチパチ
CLACK
パチパチ
CLACK
パチパチ
CLACK
CLACK



WHEW.


パチパチパチ
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK

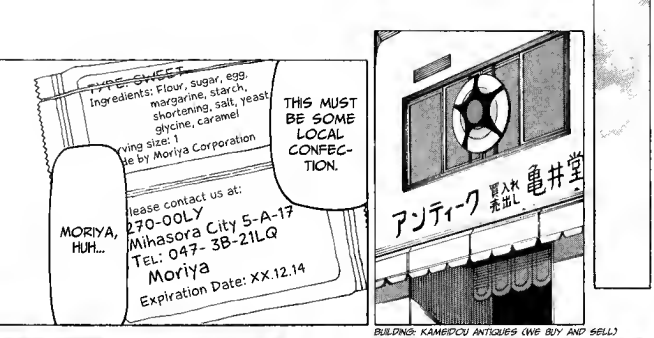
MUNCH
パク

LABEL: MORIYA CRUNCHY GOO

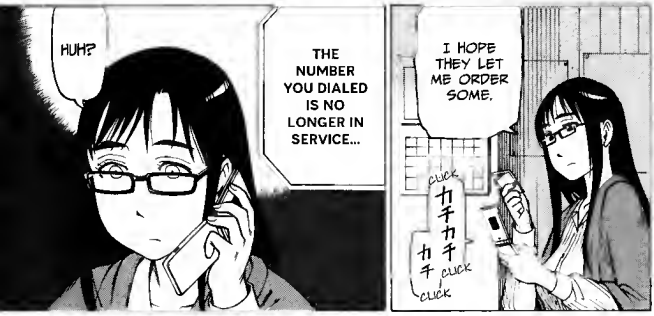
DID YOU TRY ONE?
NO, THAT WAS THE ONLY ONE I HAD... AND I WASN'T ABOUT TO EAT SOMETHING THAT COLOR.
OH... A STRANGE OLD MAN GAVE IT TO ME WHILE I WAS OUT ON A WALK.
YEAH... I THINK I DID A LONG TIME AGO...
I'VE NEVER SEEN CRUNCHY GOO BEFORE.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT?
I'LL BUY THE WHOLE STOCK TOMORROW...
I WONDER IF THEY SELL THESE AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
THUD
ゴン
OR NOT.

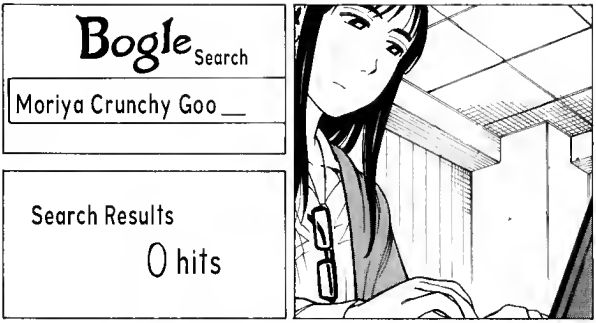
SENPAI, DID YOU EAT BREAK-FAST?
I DID.
BECAUSE YOU KEPT ON YAPPING ABOUT IT.
I SPREAD SOME TRANS FAT ON BREAD AND GOBBLED IT DOWN.
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT SOUND SO GROSS?
YOU CAN BE STRANGE SOME-TIMES...

I RARELY SEE YOU OUTSIDE THIS EARLY, SHIZUKA-NEECHAN.
YEAH.
SO...
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF CRUNCHY GOO?
NOPE.
CRUNCHY GOO...?
HMM...
SO IT ISN'T A YOUNG PEOPLE THING...
WHAT IS IT? IS IT GOOD?
IT'S DELICIOUS. IT'S BLUE, PINK, AND NEON GREEN...
THEN IT'S CRUNCHY AND GOOEY.
ARE YOU SURE IT'S EDIBLE?
I CHECKED THREE CONVENIENCE STORES THIS MORNING...
...AND NONE OF THEM WERE SELLING ANY.



BUILDING: KAMEI'DOU ANTIQUES (WE BUY AND SELL)



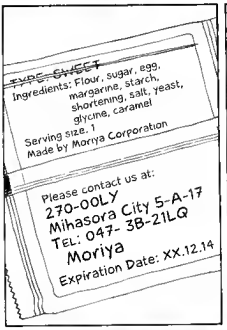


POSTER: FLEA MARKET

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

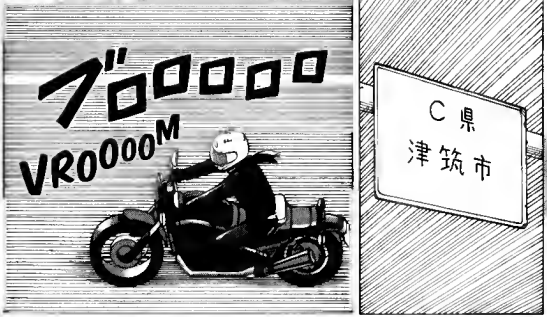
HYPER
地図MAP
日本

MAP: JAPAN


~~TYPE: SWEET~~
Ingredients: Flour, sugar, egg, margarine, starch, shortening, salt, yeast, glycine, caramel
Serving size. 1
Made by Moriya Corporation
Please contact us at:
270-00Ly
Mihasora City 5-A-17
TEL: 047- 3B-21LQ
Moriya
Expiration Date: XX.12.14

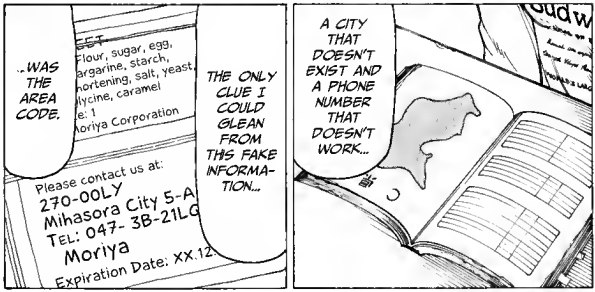
IT DOESN'T EXIST.
THERE ISN'T A MIHASORA CITY IN C PREFECTURE...
HYPER
地図MAP
日本
THE NAME SURE ISN'T FAMILIAR.

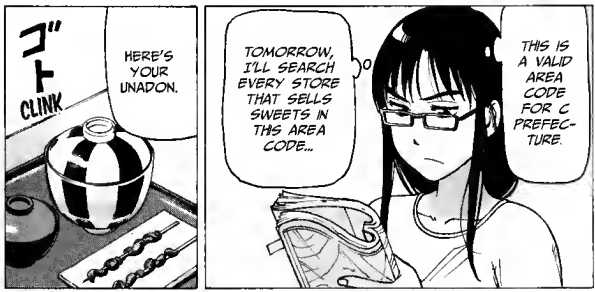
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
THE MAKER AND CONTACT INFORMATION ARE FAKE...?



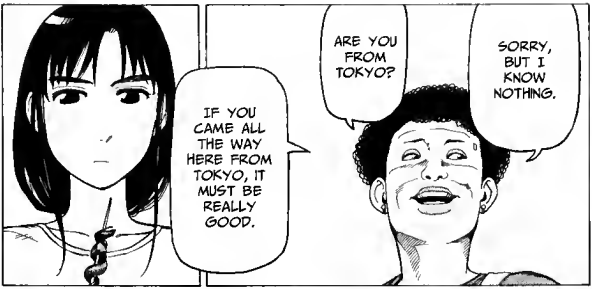
SIGN: C PREFECTURE, TSUZUKI CITY

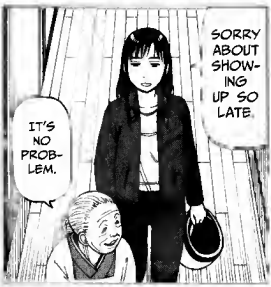
AWNING: MORIYA UNAGI MEALS


...WAS THE AREA CODE.
Flour, sugar, egg, margarine, starch, shortening, salt, yeast, glycine, caramel
e: 1
Moriya Corporation
THE ONLY CLUE I COULD GLEAN FROM THIS FAKE INFORMATION...
Please contact us at:
270-00LY
Mihasora City 5-A
TEL: 047- 38-21LG
Moriya
Expiration Date: XX.12
A CITY THAT DOESN'T EXIST AND A PHONE NUMBER THAT DOESN'T WORK...


ゴト
CLINK
HERE'S YOUR UNADON.
TOMORROW, I'LL SEARCH EVERY STORE THAT SELLS SWEETS IN THIS AREA CODE...
THIS IS A VALID AREA CODE FOR C PREFECTURE.

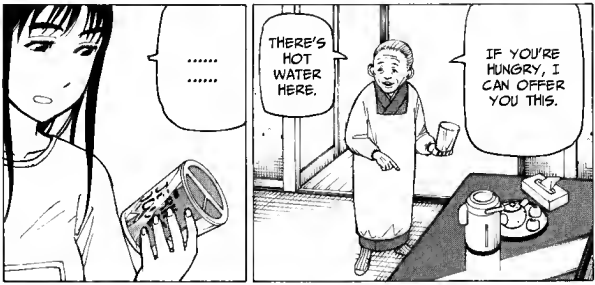
UM, EXCUSE ME...
YES?
IS THERE A SWEETS STORE CALLED MORIYA IN THE AREA?
I BELIEVE IT'S A SPECIALTY STORE OF SOME KIND...
ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT...
CRUN-CHY GOO?
YOU'RE THE THIRD PERSON WHO'S ASKED.
YOU'VE LEARNED THAT IT'S PRODUCED IN THIS AREA, RIGHT?

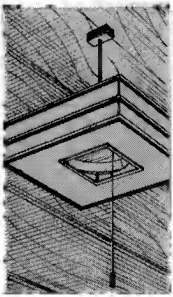


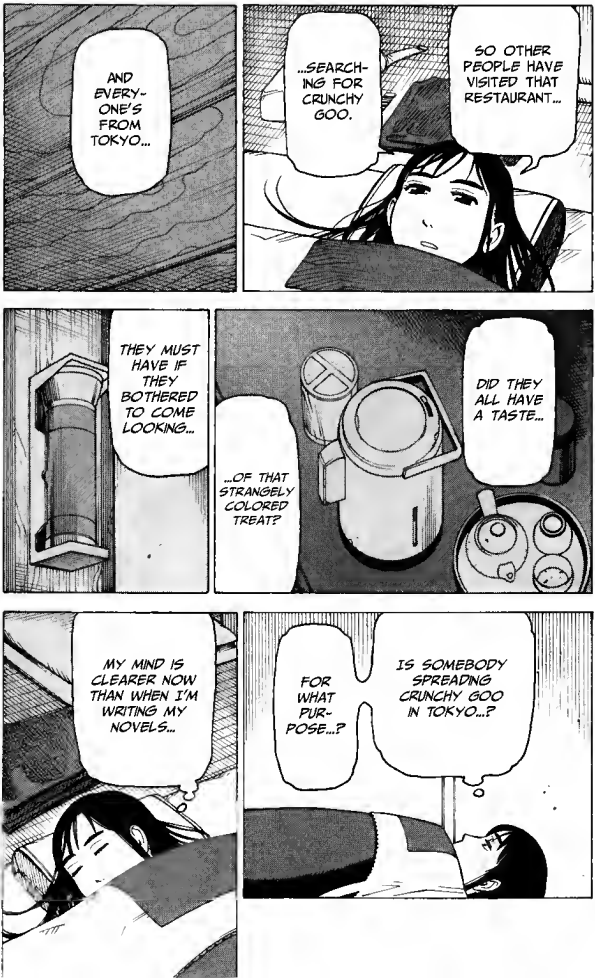


SIGN: TAGAME INN

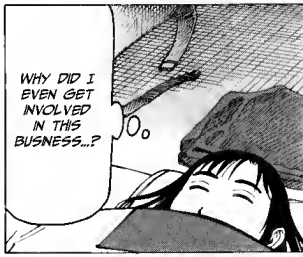
?
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF CRUNCHY GOO?
BY THE WAY...

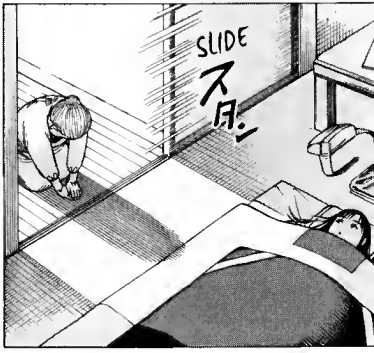

.....
.....
THERE'S HOT WATER HERE.
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, I CAN OFFER YOU THIS.

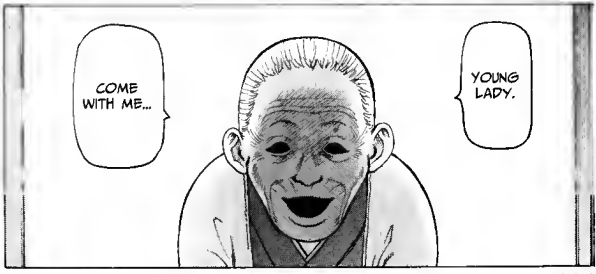



AND EVERY-ONE'S FROM TOKYO...
...SEARCH-ING FOR CRUNCHY GOO.
SO OTHER PEOPLE HAVE VISITED THAT RESTAURANT...
THEY MUST HAVE IF THEY BOTHERED TO COME LOOKING...
...OF THAT STRANGELY COLORED TREAT?
DID THEY ALL HAVE A TASTE...
MY MIND IS CLEARER NOW THAN WHEN I'M WRITING MY NOVELS...
FOR WHAT PUR-POSE...?
IS SOMEBODY SPREADING CRUNCHY GOO IN TOKYO...?

IS ANY OF THIS REAL?
DID I ACTUALLY EAT THAT TREAT?

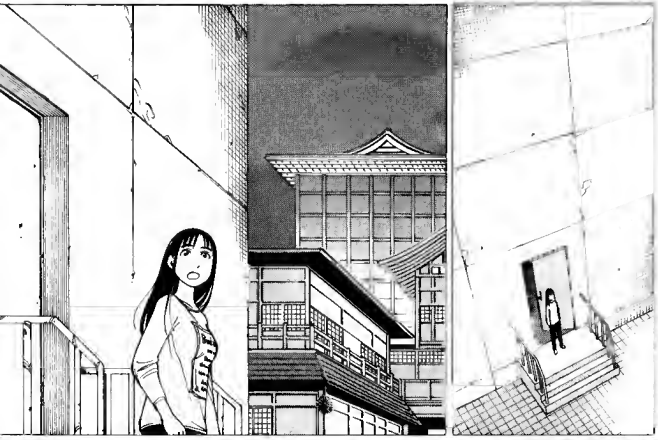

WHY DID I EVEN GET INVOLVED IN THIS BUSINESS...?
Oo


SLIDE
スラ…


YOUNG LADY.
COME WITH ME...

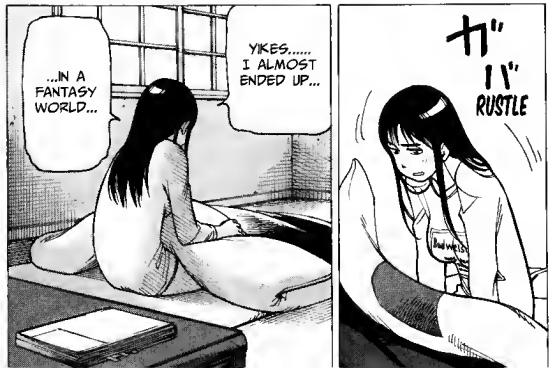
POSTERS: INUGAMI CIRCUS, CHIBA, SKY

POSTERS: DOT, INAGEYA



DON'T TELL ME THAT...
...THIS IS...
...MIHASORA CITY?

I FINALLY...
...FOUND MIHASORA CITY...

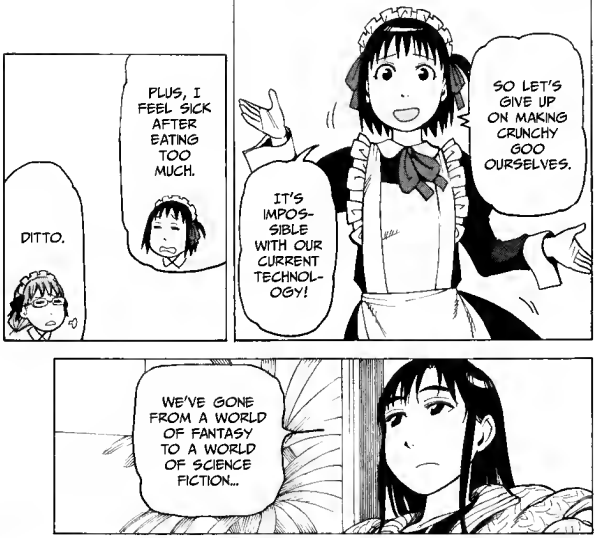

YIKES..... I ALMOST ENDED UP...
...IN A FANTASY WORLD...
RUSTLE

THIS ISN'T RIGHT.
MUNCH もぐもぐ MUNCH
NOW, LOOK HERE!
IF YOU MIX TOGETHER THOSE INGREDIENTS AND FRY THEM, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET ANYTHING BLUE OR PINK.
I KNOW THAT...

DID YOU REALLY EAT IT?
YOU WENT ALL THE WAY TO C PREFECTURE AND DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING, RIGHT?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY FUTURE TECHNOLOGY.
THAT'S IT!! FUTURE GLASSES!!

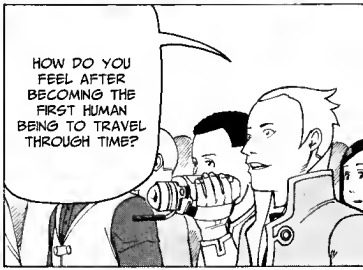
I'VE FIGURED OUT THE SECRET BEHIND THIS PACKAGE.
DON'T CALL ME THAT!
LOOK, THE EXPIRATION DATE ONLY HAS THE LAST TWO DIGITS FOR THE YEAR.
Ingredients: Flour, sugar, margarine, sta shortening, so glycine, caram
Serving size: 1
Made by Moriya Corpor
Please contact us at
270-00LY
Mihasora City S
TEL: 047- 3B-21L
Moriya
Expiration Date: XX.12.14

THAT MEANS THESE SWEETS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MADE IN 20XX...
...BUT IN 25XX, FIVE HUNDRED YEARS IN THE FUTURE.
IT WOULD MAKE SENSE FOR THERE TO BE NEW CITIES IN C PREFECTURE AFTER FIVE HUNDRED YEARS!

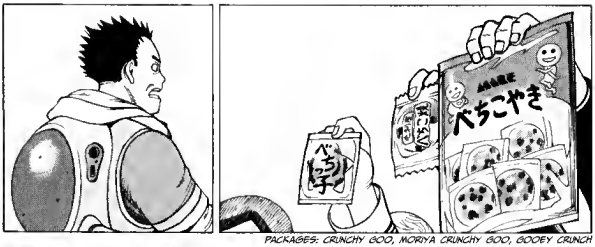

SO LET'S GIVE UP ON MAKING CRUNCHY GOO OURSELVES.
IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE WITH OUR CURRENT TECHNOL-OGY!
PLUS, I FEEL SICK AFTER EATING TOO MUCH.
DITTO.
WE'VE GONE FROM A WORLD OF FANTASY TO A WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION...

SIGNS: MORIYA SWEETS, DUCK JELLY

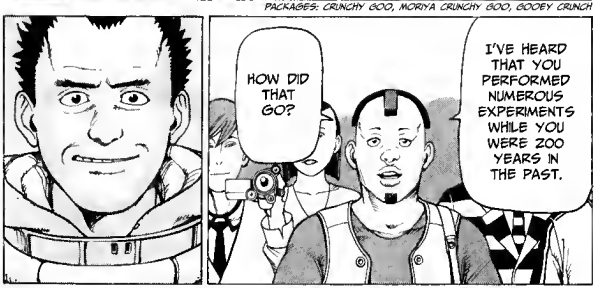
SIGN: WELCOME BACK



WELL, I REALLY ENJOY THESE TREATS CALLED CRUNCHY GOO.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE ONE RIGHT NOW.
AH.. AFTER THAT INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE, YOU WANT SOMETHING MORE COMMON.
COM-MON..?
YOU'VE HEARD OF CRUNCHY GOO BEFORE...?
.....
?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT CRUNCHY GOO?
THEY SELL THAT EVERY-WHERE.
I HAVE ONE IN MY BAG RIGHT NOW, IF YOU WANT!
I ALSO HAVE ONE ON ME!



PACKAGES: CRUNCHY GOO, MORYA CRUNCHY GOO, GOOEY CRUNCH



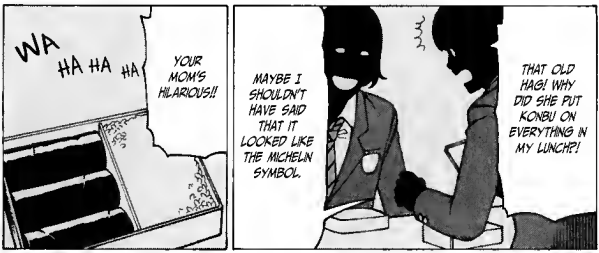
CHAPTER 70 / END

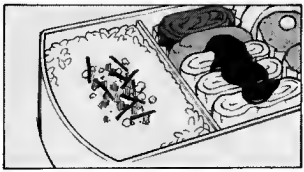
CHAPTER 71 WALKING BIRD

SHIRT: SOUTH THIRD MIDDLE

SHOVE
WHOA!
WHAT WAS THAT, ZANARI?
SHE HAS TO FALL FROM A HIGHER STEP, OR SHE WON'T GET HURT.

YOU PROMISED TO WORK IN JAPAN UNTIL I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL!
I WORKED SO HARD TO GET INTO THIS SCHOOL...
WHY?!


WA HA HA HA
YOUR MOM'S HILARIOUS!!
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT IT LOOKED LIKE THE MICHELIN SYMBOL.
THAT OLD HAG! WHY DID SHE PUT KONBU ON EVERYTHING IN MY LUNCH?!



THAT GIRL ALWAYS EATS A SANDWICH ALL BY HERSELF.
SHOULD WE INVITE HER TO JOIN US?
SHOULD YOU INVITE ME TO JOIN YOU?!
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
BAHHHH HUMBUG.
WILL MOMMY BE DISAPPOINTED IF I STOP GOING TO SCHOOL?
YEAH, PROB-ABLY...
?

KEYCHAIN: ROOF

SO, WHAT'S UP?
Re: Meet
Meet up by the statian at noon ond dress warmly.
– Hotori –

東京急行
丸子駅
UKO STATION
TOKYO EXPRESS MARUKO STATION
SORRY TO MAKE YOU WAIT.
蓮面台行のりば
PLATFORM TO HASUMODAI

OH, I WAS JUST WONDER-ING IF YOU'D HIT YOUR HEAD...
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CLEAR...
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!

LET'S GO ICE SKATING! I'LL PAY FOR YOU.

...IS SOME-THING WRONG WITH YOUR HEAD?

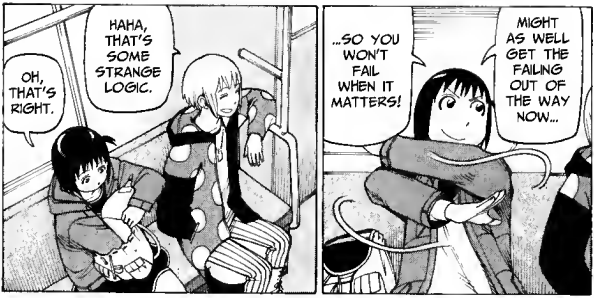
HEHEHEH... YOU CAME TO SEE ME AFTER I WAS HIT BY THE CAR.
SO YOU'RE RETURNING THE FAVOR BY TAKING ME ICE SKATING?

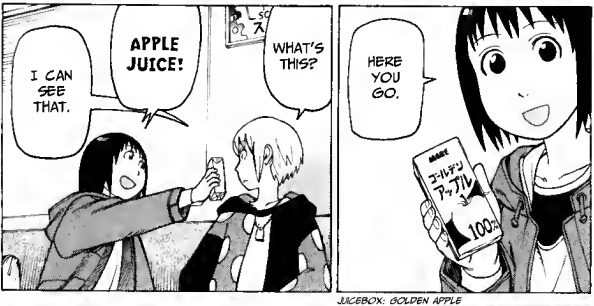
SCOPIO
スコピオ
I'VE NEVER ICE SKATED BEFORE, SO I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S FUN.
I'LL TEACH YOU.

I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING FUN.

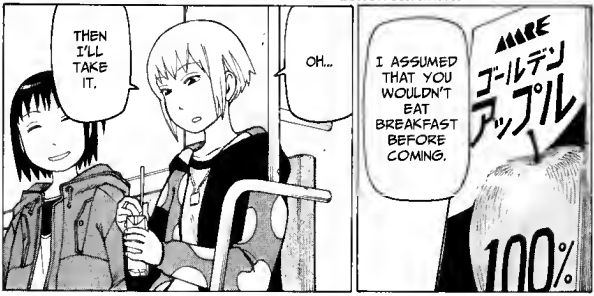
ISN'T IT A BAD IDEA TO INVITE SOMEONE PREPARING FOR EXAMS TO AN ACTIVITY THAT INVOLVES FAILURE?
DON'T YOU STILL HAVE SOME TIME LEFT?

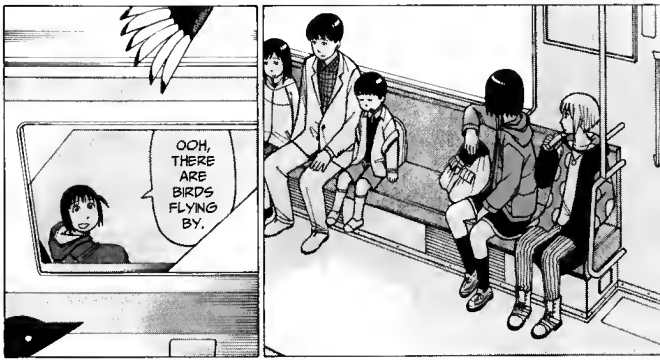
BESIDES, YOU'LL BE PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS THIS YEAR.


HAHA, THAT'S SOME STRANGE LOGIC.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
...SO YOU WON'T FAIL WHEN IT MATTERS!
MIGHT AS WELL GET THE FAILING OUT OF THE WAY NOW...

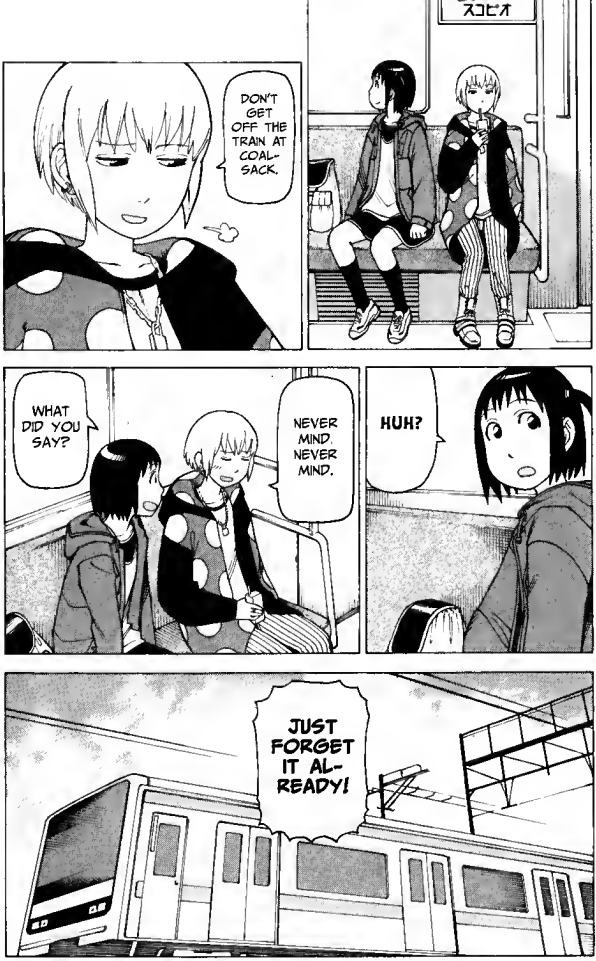


JUICEBOX: GOLDEN APPLE

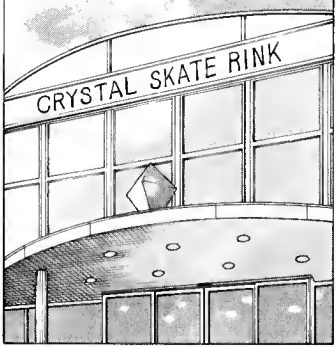



OOH, THERE ARE BIRDS FLYING BY.

PLUS, I MADE A FULL RECOVERY.
IT'LL BE FINE. I'M GOOD AT ICE SKATING.
YOU KNOW... IT COULD BE BAD IF YOU FALL AND HIT YOUR HEAD ON THE ICE AFTER YOU JUST GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.

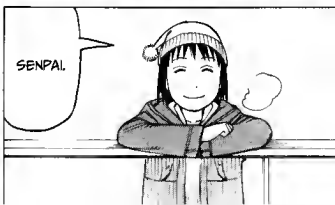

スコピオ
DON'T GET OFF THE TRAIN AT COAL-SACK.
HUH?
NEVER MIND. NEVER MIND.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
JUST FORGET IT AL-READY!

ゴ
SHUUNK

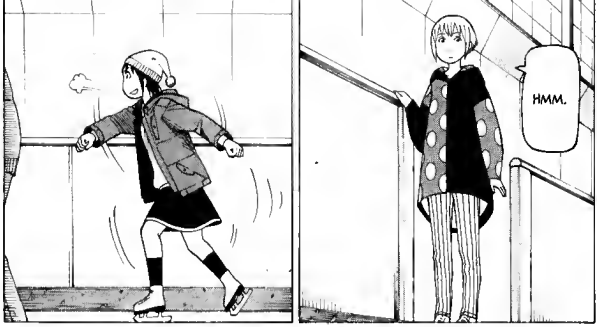

CRYSTAL SKATE RINK

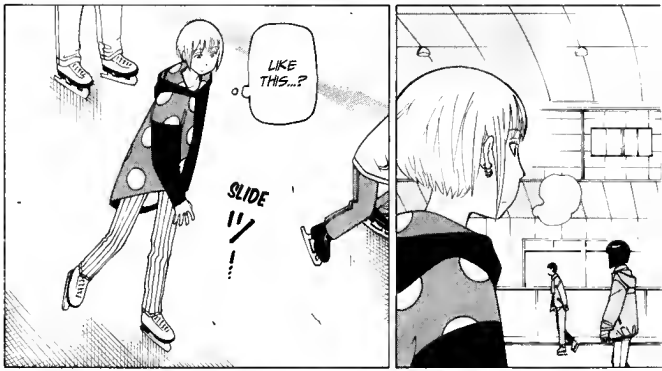
JUST FOLLOW MY LEAD.

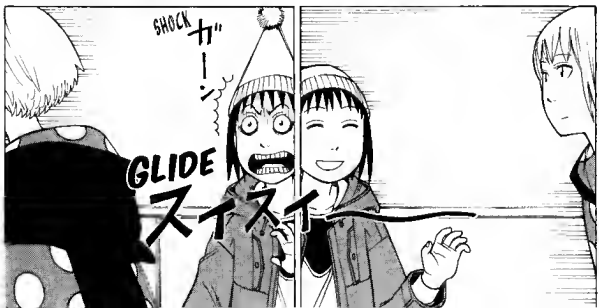
OH, I THOUGHT THEY JUST TIED A KNIFE TO THE BOTTOM OF YOUR SHOE...
...BUT IT ACTUALLY FEELS LIKE PART OF MY FOOT.


SENPAI.

WOO!
WAH!
カス FLAP
カス FLAP
HUFF ...
HUFF ...
HO!
HO!
HO!
カス FLAP
カス FLAP
カス FLAP
WHAT WAS THERE TO GET?!
THAT DIDN'T LOOK FUN AT ALL!
DID YOU GET THAT?
WHY WAS SHE SO CONFIDENT...?
ONE TIME!!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU GONE ICE SKATING?


HMM.


LIKE THIS...?
SLIDE
ツ！


SHOCK
ガーン
GLIDE
スイスイ

WHUMP
つるでん
YOU'VE ONLY BEEN HERE FOR TEN MINUTES !!
DON'T LEAVE THE VETERAN BEHIND!
HEY!
WAIT!
I HAVE A FEELING THAT THIS IS SIMILAR TO STANDING ON A SWING.
YOU MOVE AROUND TOO MUCH.
YOU KNOW...
THEN USE YOUR ARMS TO...
TAKE TURNS SWINGING YOUR FEET AND SHIFT YOUR WEIGHT ACCORD-INGLY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO WALK.

SENPAI, CAN WE SKATE HOLDING HANDS?
THAT MIGHT HELP ME UNDER-STAND.

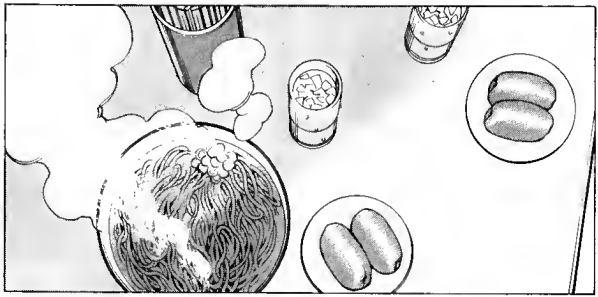
WELL, IT'S MY FIRST TIME, SO I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE...
YOU SHOULD DO WHAT MAKES SENSE TO YOU. SORRY.

SURE.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHOSE NAME MEANS "WALKING BIRD."

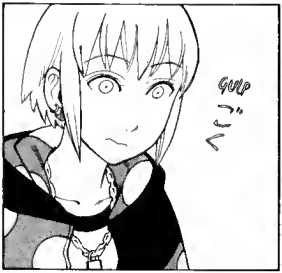
SO THIS IS HOW IT FEELS TO BE BORN WITH GREAT REFLEXES...
MAYBE YOU WERE A PENGUIN IN YOUR PAST LIFE.

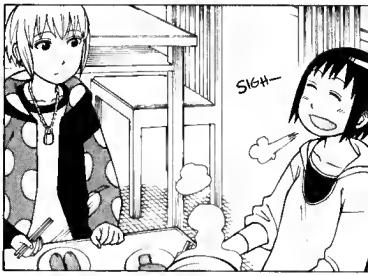
AWNING: SOBA PEACOCK

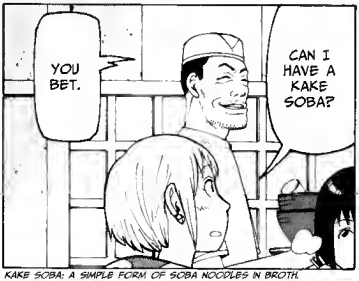


SIGN: DUCK PUMPKIN SOBA ¥400, EGGPLANT SOBA ¥400

SLURP
ズ〜
HA-
FWOO
MUNCH
ほふ
ほふ…
MUNCH
CHOMP
かぶ
MUNCH
もぐっ
MUNCH
もぐっ
もぐっ
MUNCH
SIP
じゅ
じゅ
SIP
SIP
じゅ
GULP
ぐびっ

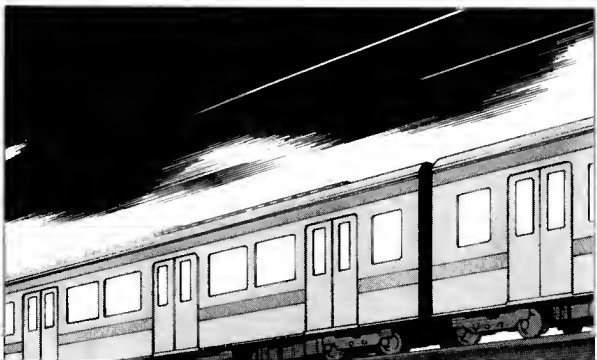




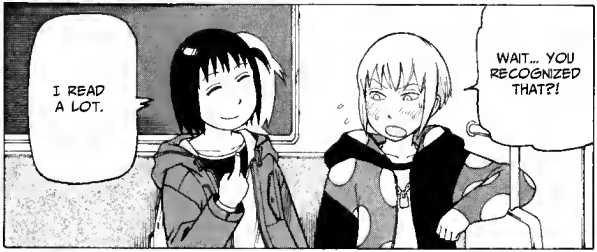


KAKE SOBA: A SIMPLE FORM OF SOBA NOODLES IN BROTH.

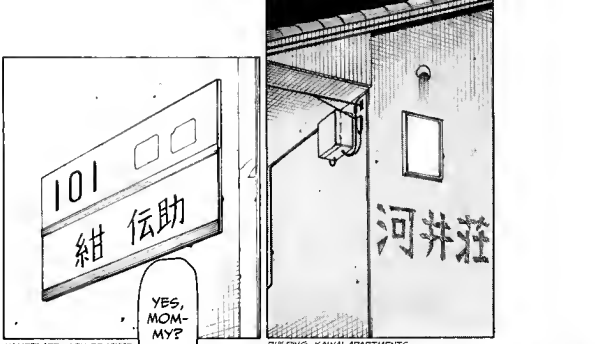
POSTER: ASAHI SUPER DRY



WHEW, THAT WAS FUN!
CLATTER
ゴトン
CLATTER
ゴトン
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE EATEN SO MUCH.
—DID YOU ENJOY IT?
GO AHEAD. I'LL WAKE YOU UP WHEN WE GET THERE.
...FALL ASLEEP ...
YEAH, I'M SO FULL THAT I'M GONNA...

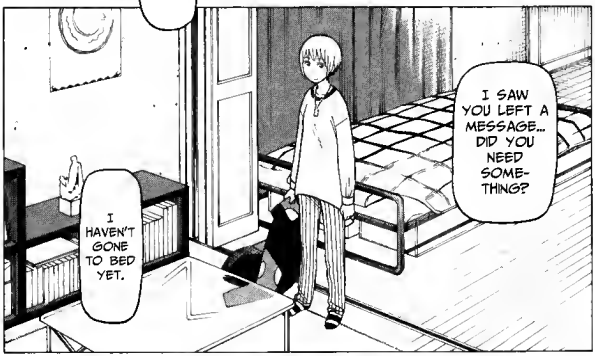


MIYAZAWA KENJI: AUTHOR OF SEVERAL CHILDREN'S STORIES, INCLUDING NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD. THE SOUTHERN CROSS CONSTELLATION AND COALSACK NEBULA ARE REFERENCED AS STOPS ON THE RAILROAD.

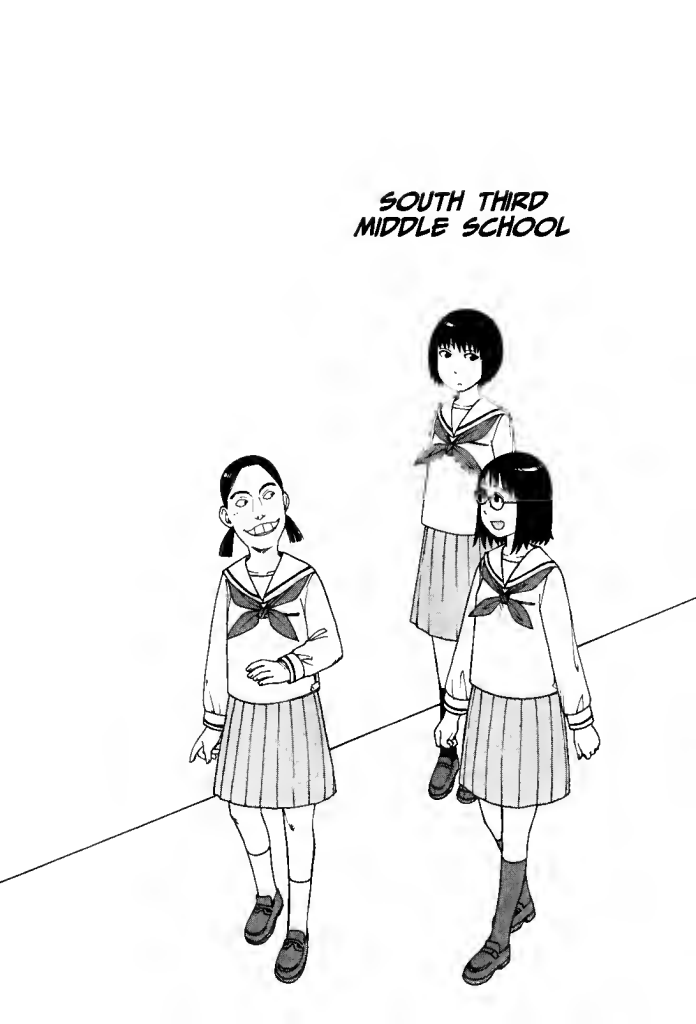


NAMEPLATE: KON DENSUKE

BUILDING: KAWAI APARTMENTS

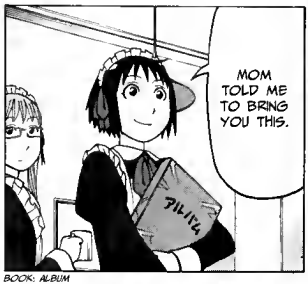


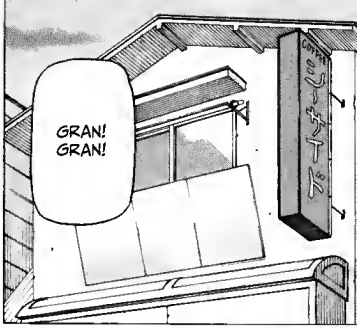
CHAPTER 71 / END


SOUTH THIRD
MIDDLE SCHOOL

HONZAKA MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 72
THE GHOST OF RI-CHAN THE LIAR


MOM TOLD ME TO BRING YOU THIS.
アルバム

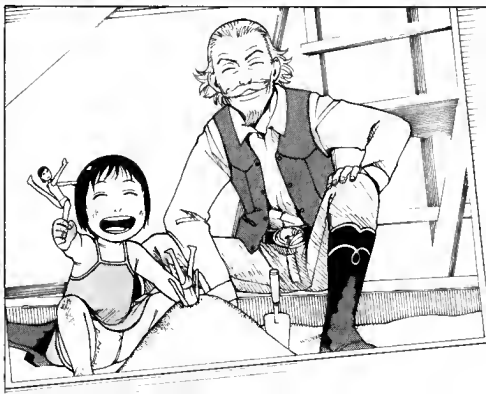

GRAN! GRAN!
ケーキ

BOOK: ALBUM

LOOK, IT'S GRAMPS!

MOM FOUND THIS YESTERDAY WHILE SHE WAS GOING THROUGH OLD PICTURES.
NO, NO.
WHAT? IS IT FOOD?

OH... YOU'RE RIGHT.

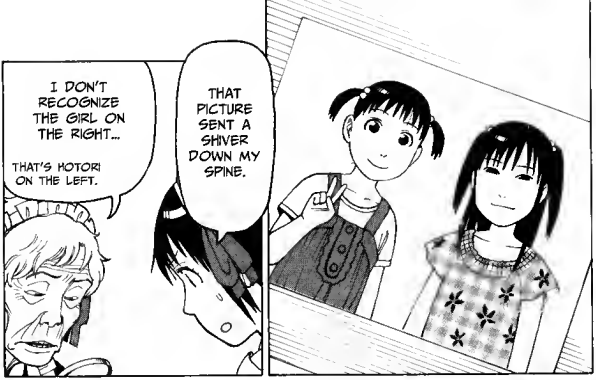


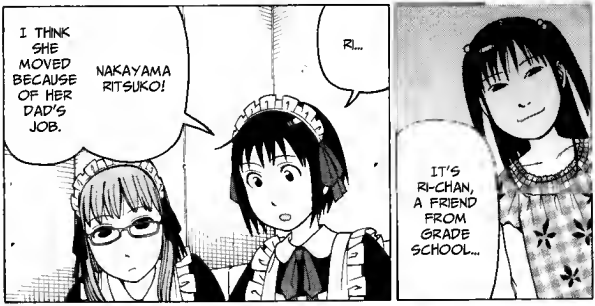
YOU CAN HAVE THIS PICTURE.
WHY IS HE POSING IN A SANDBOX...?
IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE TO KEEP IT HERE.
THIS IS YOUR MEMORY.
THANK YOU. BUT IT'S OKAY.
...BUT YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH...
EVERYONE USED TO SAY THAT YOU WOULD GROW UP TO BE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...
ANYWAY, THAT REMINDS ME.
LABEL: HOTORI, AGE 4, UENO ZOO

LABEL: HIRO-CHAN JUMPS INTO THE POOL...

THIS IS MY MEMORY, SO IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE TO KEEP IT HERE.
GIVE ME THIS!
SOO-OOOO CUUU-UTE!
JAPAN
OH, THIS PICTURE IS ODD.
YOU'RE RIGHT... THE ADULTS ALL LOOK NORMAL.
JAPAN
THE KIDS ALL LOOK SURPRISED.
WAS THIS WHEN WE WERE VISITING MY MOM'S RELA-TIVES...?

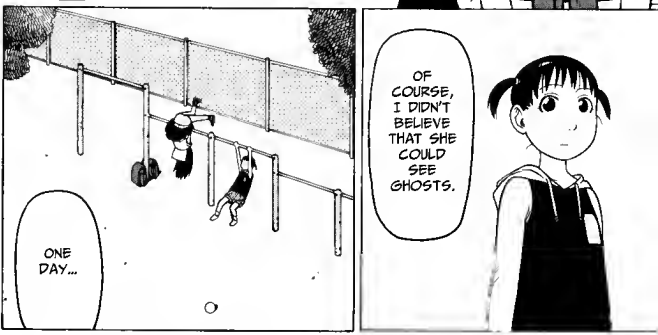
IT SOUNDS CREEPY WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY.
SOMETHING THAT ONLY THE KIDS COULD SEE...
I WONDER WHY? I CAN'T REMEMBER. DID WE SEE SOMETHING?
WE STOPPED PLAYING TOGETHER AFTER AWHILE.
THERE AREN'T ANY MORE PICTURES OF SANADA-KUN?
WAIT...!
!

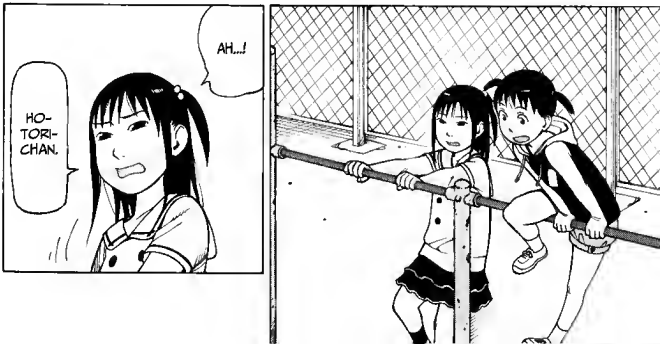

I DON'T RECOGNIZE THE GIRL ON THE RIGHT...
THAT'S HOTORI ON THE LEFT.
THAT PICTURE SENT A SHIVER DOWN MY SPINE.


I THINK SHE MOVED BECAUSE OF HER DAD'S JOB.
NAKAYAMA RITSUKO!
RI...
IT'S RI-CHAN, A FRIEND FROM GRADE SCHOOL...

.....
OH, THAT SOUNDS INTERESTING. TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS.
I THINK SOMETHING REALLY SCARY HAPPENED WHEN I WAS WITH HER.....

SOMETIMES, RI-CHAN WOULD TELL PEOPLE THAT SHE COULD SEE GHOSTS OR TALK TO GHOSTS...
EVERYONE CALLED HER RI-CHAN THE LIAR..


OF COURSE, I DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT SHE COULD SEE GHOSTS.
ONE DAY...

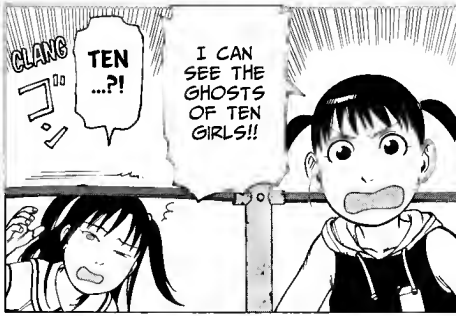

AH...!
HO-TORI-CHAN.

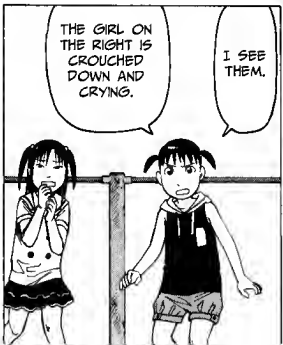
I SEE A GHOST OVER THERE!
I SEE ONE... OVER THERE!
SEE WHAT?
THAT'S WHEN I HAD AN IDEA.
THERE SHE GOES AGAIN. I WISH SHE WOULD STOP...
BUT I NEVER DREAMED THAT IT WOULD SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL...
WHAT WOULD RI-CHAN DO...
...IF I PLAYED ALONG AND SAID THAT I COULD SEE THE GHOST?

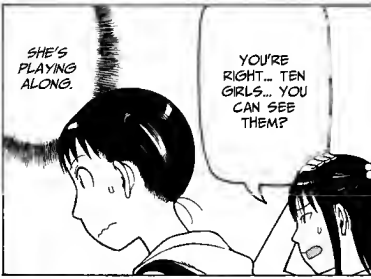
HUH?
YOU'RE RIGHT... I SEE HER!

I SEE A GHOST OVER THERE...
IT'S A GIRL.

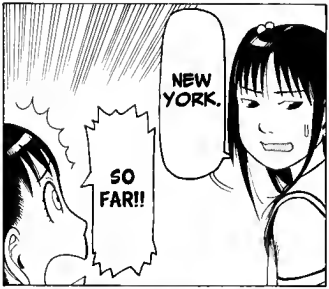
HOW WILL SHE RESPOND?!

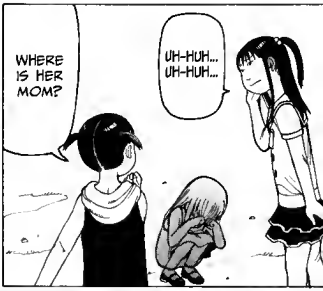

I CAN SEE THE GHOSTS OF TEN GIRLS!!
TEN ...?!
CLANG
ゴ...


THE GIRL ON THE RIGHT IS CROUCHED DOWN AND CRYING.
I SEE THEM.


SHE'S PLAYING ALONG.
YOU'RE RIGHT... TEN GIRLS... YOU CAN SEE THEM?

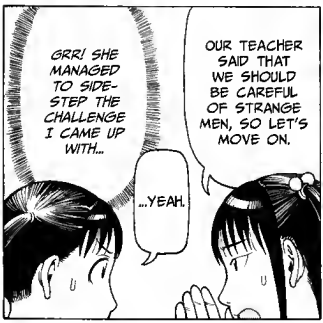
WE BEGAN EXCHANGING STORIES ABOUT NONEXISTENT GHOSTS.
HMM.
HMM...
WHY IS SHE CRYING? GO ASK HER, HOTORI-CHAN.
WHAT?!
O-OKAY.
RI-CHAN, ASK HER WHERE HER MOM IS!
SHE WANTS TO SEE HER MOM.

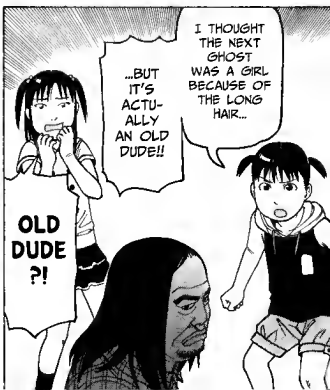

NEW YORK.
SO FAR!!


WHERE IS HER MOM?
UH-HUH... UH-HUH...

AH!

YEAH... LET'S TRY THE NEXT GHOST.
WE CAN'T GO TO NEW YORK.


GRR! SHE MANAGED TO SIDE-STEP THE CHALLENGE I CAME UP WITH...
OUR TEACHER SAID THAT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL OF STRANGE MEN, SO LET'S MOVE ON.
...YEAH.

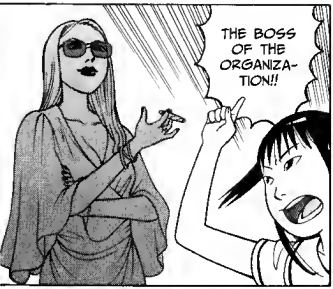

I THOUGHT THE NEXT GHOST WAS A GIRL BECAUSE OF THE LONG HAIR...
...BUT IT'S ACTU-ALLY AN OLD DUDE!!
OLD DUDE ?!

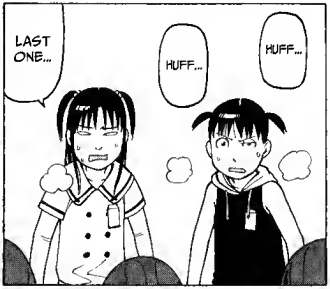
RI-CHAN'S TRYING TO GET THIS OVER WITH.
THREE SIS-TERS?!
THE THREE OF THEM ARE SISTERS!
HOTORI-CHAN!
THIS GHOST IS AN OFFICE LADY WHO WAS KILLED BY A YOUNG MAN!
OH, NO!
THE CAR THEY WERE IN COLLIDED WITH A TAXI, AND THEY DIED...
BAH.
THE COPS WILL DO THAT FOR US. LET'S MOVE ON.
NO WAY...
SHE WANTS US TO HELP CATCH HER KILLER!

YOU'RE ADDING A LOT OF BACK-GROUND DETAIL.
THIS IS THE GHOST OF A COLLEGE STUDENT WHO WORKED AS A DETECTIVE'S ASSISTANT INSTEAD OF GOING TO SCHOOL.
THE NEXT GHOST IS...
BACK-GROUND ?!
NO, NEVER MIND.
SHE BROUGHT BACK THE OLD MAN!! HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A DETECTIVE...
WHAAAAT?!
OH, THE OLD GUY FROM BEFORE IS THE DETECTIVE SHE WORKED FOR.
UM... ERRRR... UMMMM...
WHAT?!
RI-CHAN, ASK THEM!
WAIT, WHY ARE THE DETECTIVE AND HIS ASSISTANT BOTH DEAD?

THEY WERE INVESTIGATING A MURDER...
...WHEN THEY WERE KNOCKED OFF BY A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION!!
NOW WE HAVE A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION—!
COME ON, HOTORI-CHAN. WHAT'S NEXT?
UM...
SHE'S INVESTIGATING THE MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION FOR ICPO.
WHAT'S ICPO?
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANIZATION.
YOU KNOW SOME WEIRD STUFF...
OKAY, SO WHY IS THE INTERPOL OFFICER A GHOST IN THIS PLACE?
ANSWER, RI-CHAN!
UGH!
SHE WAS... FOLLOWING THE MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION...

...WHEN SHE WAS TAKEN OUT BY THEIR ASSASSINS!!
THE ORGANIZATION SENT THREE SISTERS WHO USED NUNCHUCKS!
SHE BROUGHT BACK THE THREE SISTERS —!
THE NEXT GHOST IS A FEMALE ASSASSIN WHO DRESSES LIKE A MAN.
NOW SHE'S GETTING CARRIED AWAY.
SO THE YOUNG MAN WHO KILLED THAT OFFICE LADY WAS...
MOST LIKELY!!
NEXT!
A TAXI DRIVER WHO GOT IN AN ACCIDENT AND DIED.
THE TAXI THAT HIT THE CAR THOSE THREE NUNCHUCK SISTERS WERE IN—!!
ぱしぃっ SLAP

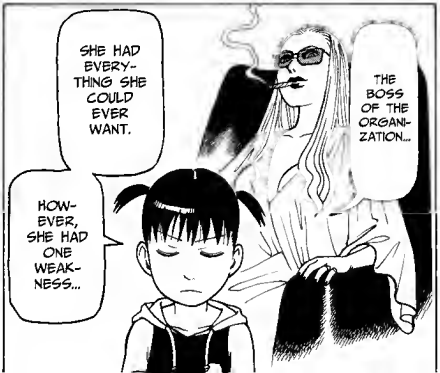

THE BOSS OF THE ORGANIZA-TION!!

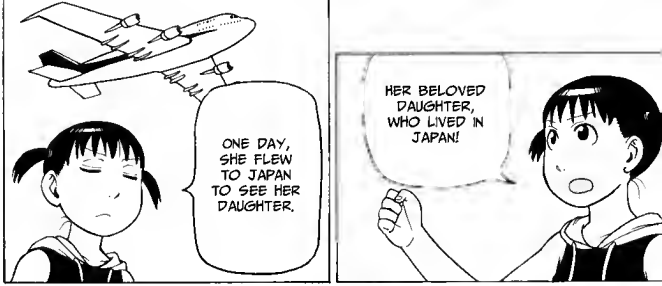

LAST ONE...
HUFF...
HUFF...

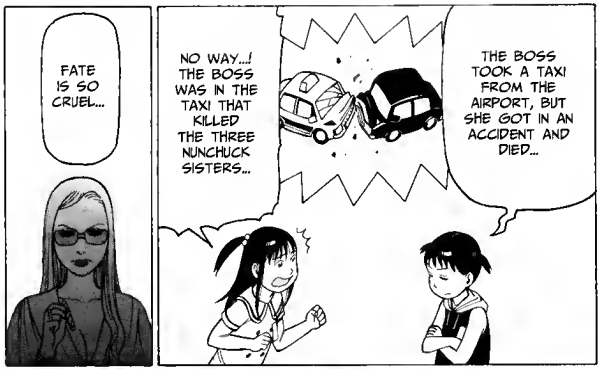
SHE'S GIVEN ME ONE LAST TOUGHIE.

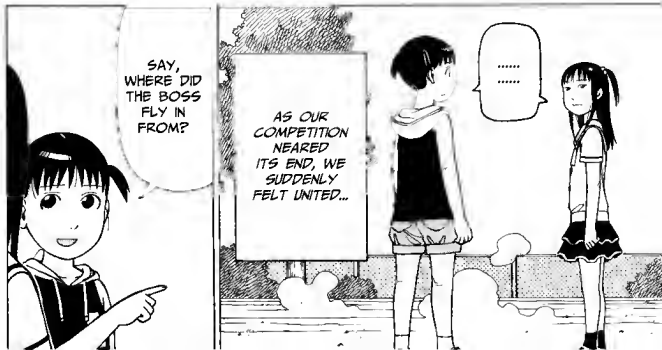
ASK HER WHY !!
YOU THINK OF A REASON... I MEAN...
WHY IS THE BOSS A GHOST HERE?!!

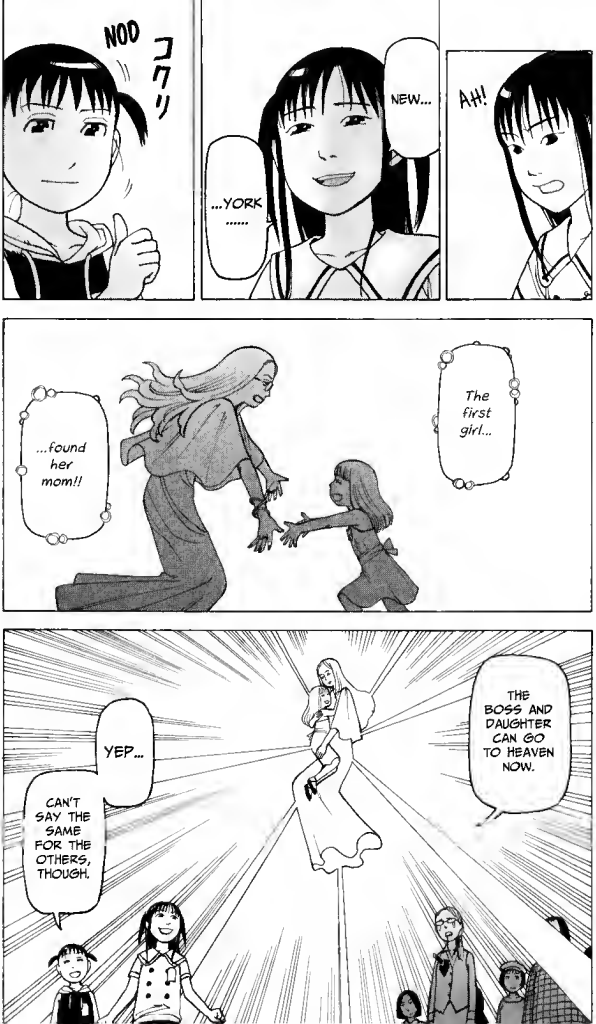
WHICH WAS...?
THUMP
ドキ
ドキ
THUMP

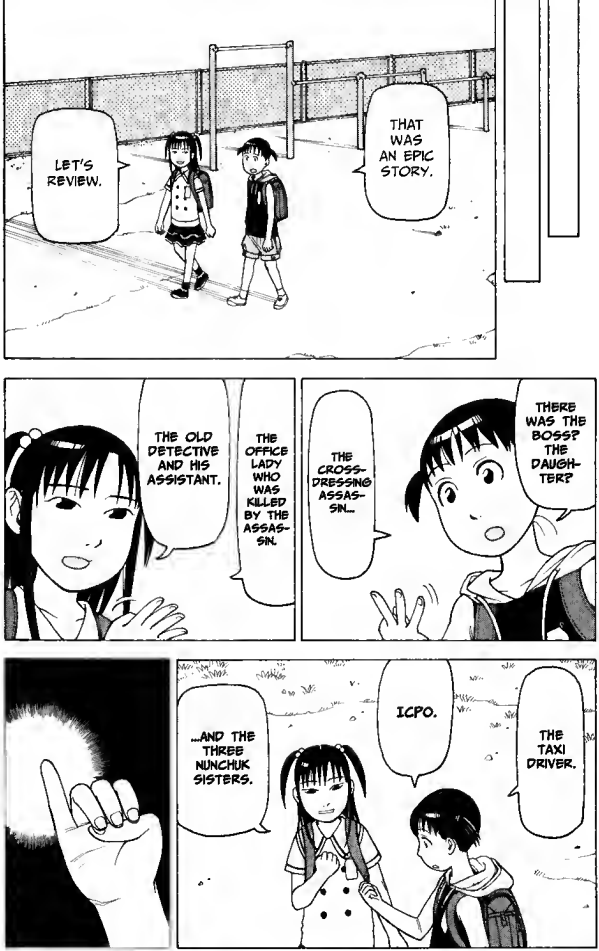

SHE HAD EVERY-THING SHE COULD EVER WANT.
HOW-EVER, SHE HAD ONE WEAK-NESS...
THE BOSS OF THE ORGANI-ZATION...


ONE DAY, SHE FLEW TO JAPAN TO SEE HER DAUGHTER.
HER BELOVED DAUGHTER, WHO LIVED IN JAPAN!

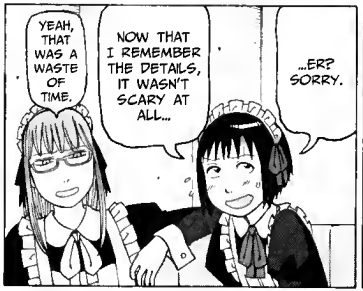

FATE IS SO CRUEL...
NO WAY...! THE BOSS WAS IN THE TAXI THAT KILLED THE THREE NUNCHUCK SISTERS...
THE BOSS TOOK A TAXI FROM THE AIRPORT, BUT SHE GOT IN AN ACCIDENT AND DIED...

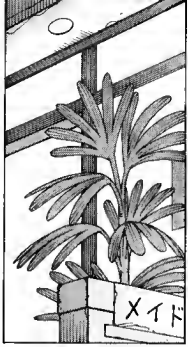

SAY, WHERE DID THE BOSS FLY IN FROM?
AS OUR COMPETITION NEARED ITS END, WE SUDDENLY FELT UNITED...
.....
.....


NOD
コクリ
NEW...
...YORK
.....
AH!
...found her mom!!
The first girl...
CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR THE OTHERS, THOUGH.
YEP...
THE BOSS AND DAUGHTER CAN GO TO HEAVEN NOW.


THAT WAS AN EPIC STORY.
LET'S REVIEW.
THERE WAS THE BOSS? THE DAUGHTER?
THE CROSS-DRESSING ASSASSIN...
THE OFFICE LADY WHO WAS KILLED BY THE ASSASSIN.
THE OLD DETECTIVE AND HIS ASSISTANT.
THE TAXI DRIVER.
ICPO.
...AND THE THREE NUNCHUK SISTERS.

THERE WERE ELEVEN!
HUH?
ANOTHER GHOST SHOWED UP!!
WHERE DID THE EXTRA ONE COME FROM?!
HOTORI-CHAN, YOU SAID THERE WERE TEN, RIGHT?!
SHRIEE-EEEEEEEE-EEEEK!!
EEEEE-EEEEK!!
WAAAA-AAAH!!


YEAH, THAT WAS A WASTE OF TIME.
NOW THAT I REMEMBER THE DETAILS, IT WASN'T SCARY AT ALL...
...ER? SORRY.


メイド

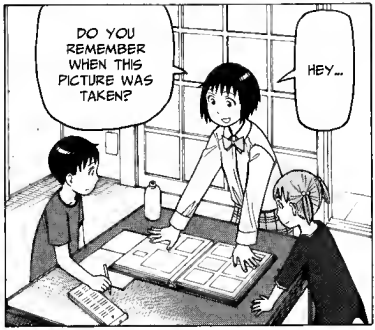
YOU ENTER A TRANCE WHEN YOU LISTEN TO SCARY STORIES.

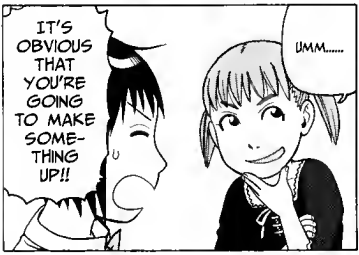
I WAS REALLY SCARED AT THE TIME!
BUT...
COMPLETE WASTE.

'KAY...
IF THERE'S A STUPID STORY BEHIND THE SURPRISED KIDS IN THAT OTHER PICTURE, YOU HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE A CAT!!

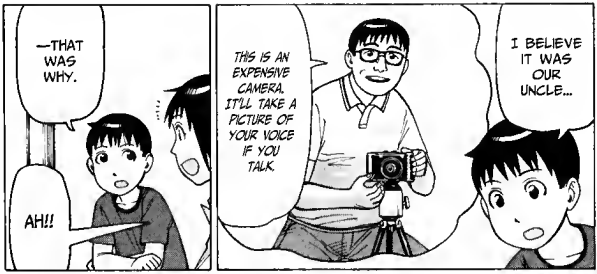
I'M HOME.
WEL-COME BACK...

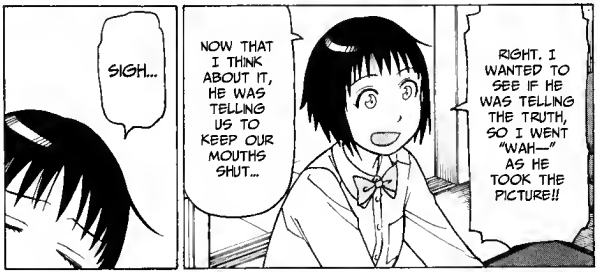
NOTICE HOW THE KIDS ALL LOOK SUR-PRISED?
DO YOU REMEM-BER WHAT WE SAW?

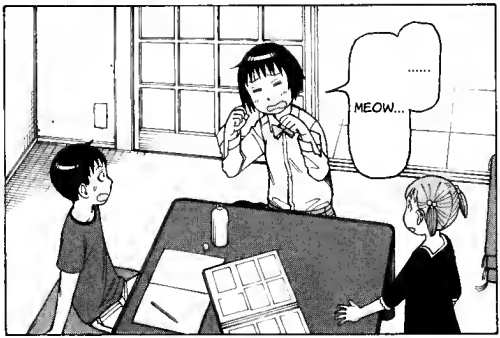

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN?
HEY...


IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE SOME-THING UP!!
UMM.....

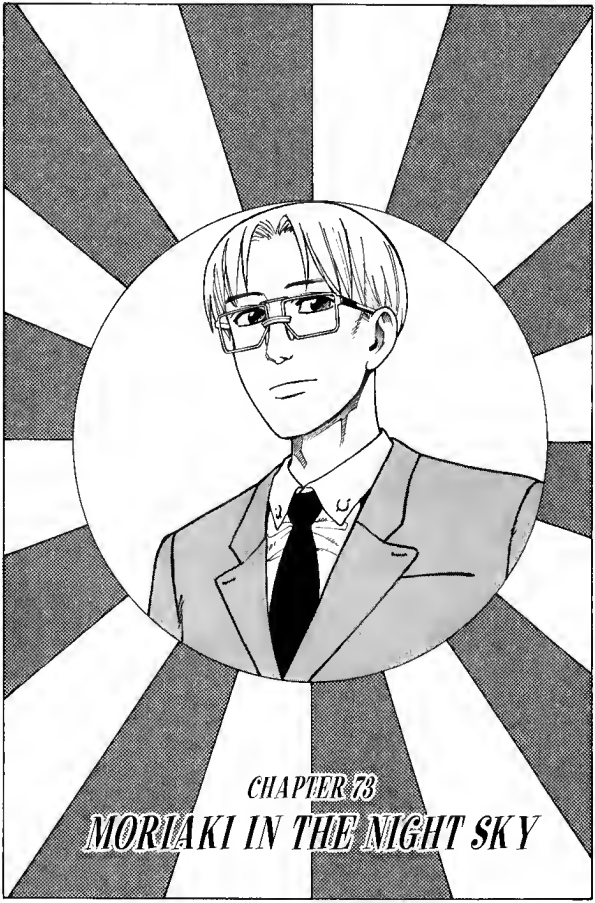
I DO !!




RIGHT. I WANTED TO SEE IF HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH, SO I WENT "WAH—" AS HE TOOK THE PICTURE!!
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, HE WAS TELLING US TO KEEP OUR MOUTHS SHUT...
SIGH...



CHAPTER 72 / END



CHAPTER 73

MORIAKI IN THE NIGHT SKY

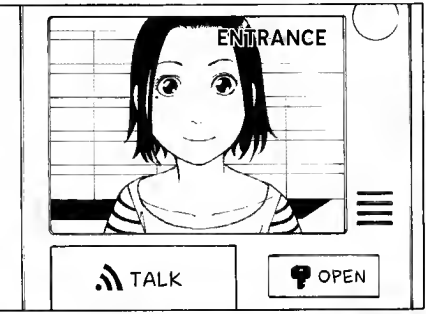
MOVIE POSTERS: DEMON MASTER MACHIRU / GOODZILLA VS. MECHAGOODZILLA / SOMEONE ELSE'S LOVE

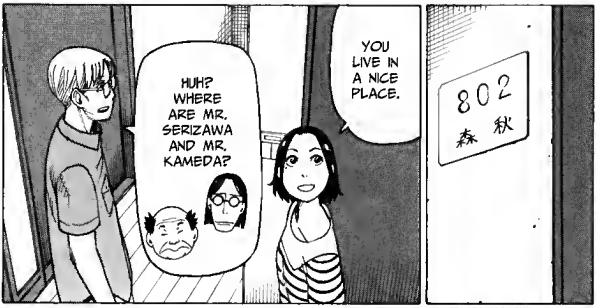
MOVIE GUIDES: GOODZILLA VS. MECHAGOODZILLA

WE COULD GRAB DINNER...
DON'T SWEAT IT.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR THE FIREWORKS?
IT'S NOTHING, SENPAI... I'M GLAD YOU ENJOYED THE MOVIE...
I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP...

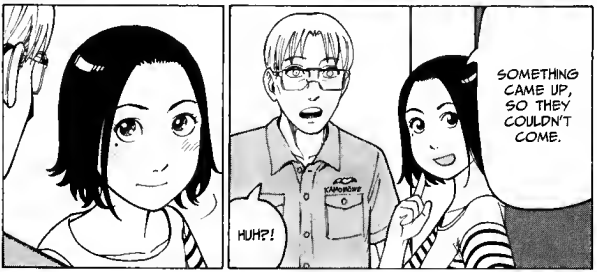
«SEE VOLUME 8: "THE GREAT BEAST APPEARS AT OYA HIGH SCHOOL"

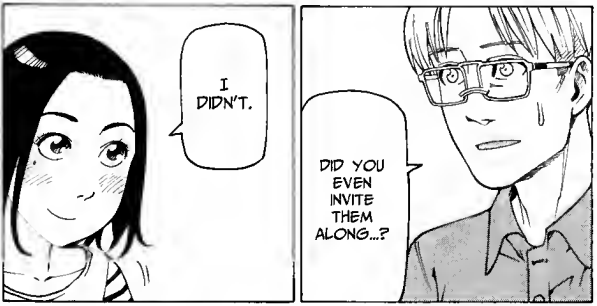
BUILDING: TSURUU APARTMENT COMPLEX





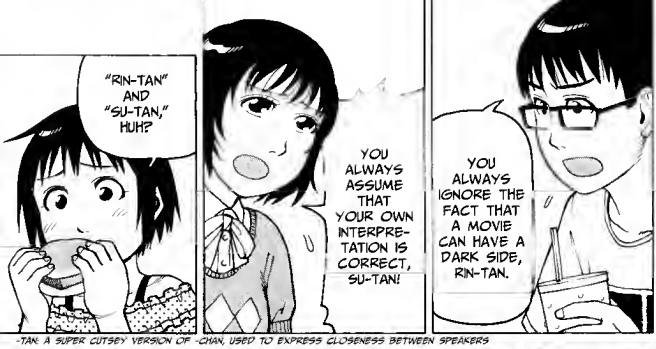
NAMEPLATE: MORIAKI



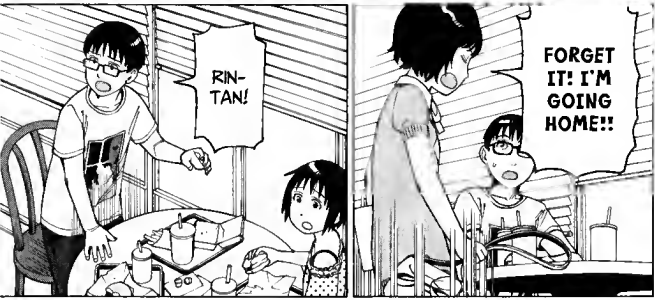


I CAME HERE TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS.
MISS NISHI!! LET'S GO OUT TO EAT.
ZIP
THUD
!!!
KAMOMÖWE
SO WE DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE THE ROOM
LET'S ORDER A PIZZA...

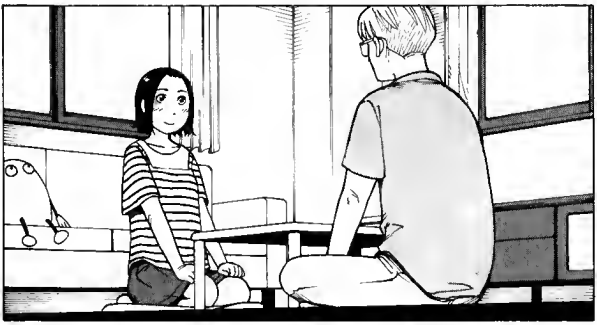
NO, NO, NO.
IT WAS A SOCIAL COMMENTARY DISGUISED AS MINDLESS ENTERTAIN-MENT.
Flaburger
ENTER-TAIN-MENT?
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE HOW DIRECTOR NOTHIN NADA USED SCENES TAKEN STRAIGHT FROM OLD SATIRICAL FILMS?
NO WAY... I WOULDN'T EXPECT THAT MOVIE TO HAVE A MESSAGE.
BOOK: DIRECTOR
UM...
THAT SCENE WAS MEANT TO BE HUMOROUS BLAH BLAH BLAH!
IF YOU COULDN'T RECOGNIZE THE IRONY, YOU COMPLETELY MISSED THE THEME OF THE FILM BLAH BLAH BLAH...

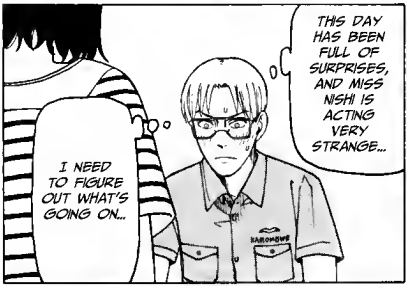

"RIN-TAN" AND "SU-TAN," HUH?
YOU ALWAYS ASSUME THAT YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, SU-TAN!
YOU ALWAYS IGNORE THE FACT THAT A MOVIE CAN HAVE A DARK SIDE, RIN-TAN.

-TAN: A SUPER CUTSEY VERSION OF -CHAN, USED TO EXPRESS CLOSENESS BETWEEN SPEAKERS



PAN: SUMIDAGAWA FIREWORKS FESTIVAL




THIS DAY HAS BEEN FULL OF SURPRISES, AND MISS NISHI IS ACTING VERY STRANGE...
I NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON...

HMM?

WHA ?!
ピーンポーン
DING DONG!

ENTRANCE
THAT PIZZA DELIVERY PERSON LOOKS LIKE ARASHI-YAMA.
TALK
OPEN
OR... WAIT...
IT'S THE PIZZA DELIVERY PERSON...
HOW DID YOU LEARN MY ADDRESS?
IT WAS ON THE NEW YEAR'S CARD YOU SENT.
I DON'T HAVE ANY IDENTIFI-CATION ON ME...
...BUT I THINK, THERE-FORE I AM ARASHI-YAMA.
IS THAT THE REAL ARASHI-YAMA?
UGH.
THAT'S RIGHT!!

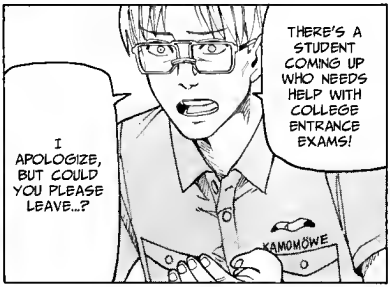
...AS A TEACHER, I'M OBLIGATED TO HELP...

DO YOU HAVE TIME...?
UMM, I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS.

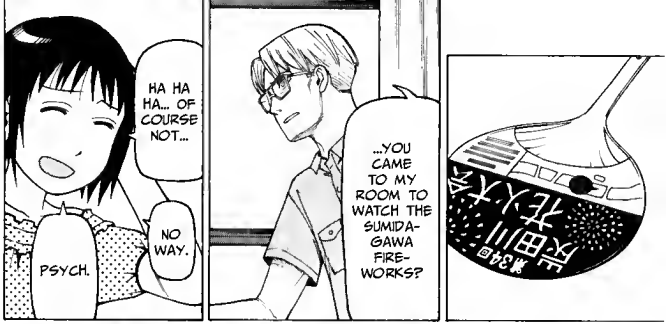
MISS NISHI!!
YES?

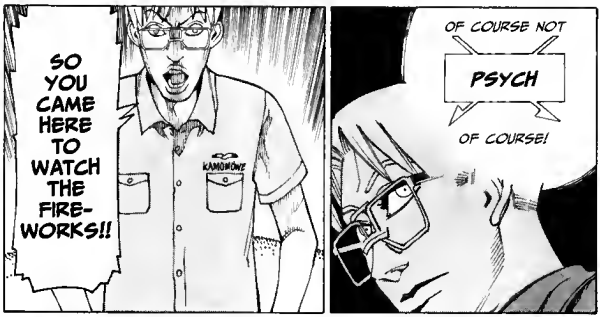
BUZZ
HERE I GO.

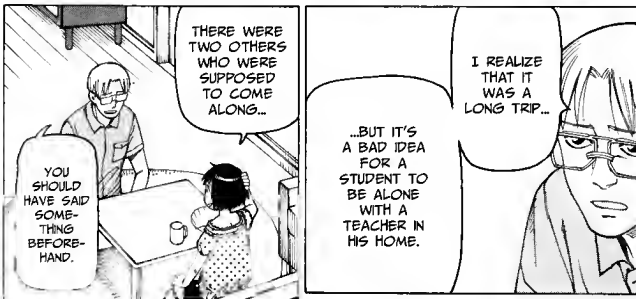
WOULD IT LOOK BAD IF I'M HERE?


I APOLOGIZE, BUT COULD YOU PLEASE LEAVE...?
THERE'S A STUDENT COMING UP WHO NEEDS HELP WITH COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS!
KAMOMŌWE

WHIR...
HURRY! USE THE STAIRS TO LEAVE BEFORE THE ELEVATOR ARRIVES!
NO! WE JUST DON'T WANT THE STUDENTS TO GET THE WRONG IDEA.
I CAN USE ARASHIYAMA'S SUDDEN VISIT AS AN EXCUSE TO GET RID OF MISS NISHI AND HER UNSETTLING BEHAVIOR...
SHIFT
ARASHI-YAMA... COULD IT BE THAT...


HA HA HA... OF COURSE NOT...
NO WAY.
PSYCH.
...YOU CAME TO MY ROOM TO WATCH THE SUMIDA-GAWA FIRE-WORKS?
第34回 隅田川花火大会


SO YOU CAME HERE TO WATCH THE FIRE-WORKS!!
KAMOMONE
OF COURSE NOT
PSYCH
OF COURSE!


THERE WERE TWO OTHERS WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO COME ALONG...
YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SOME-THING BEFORE-HAND.
I REALIZE THAT IT WAS A LONG TRIP...
...BUT IT'S A BAD IDEA FOR A STUDENT TO BE ALONE WITH A TEACHER IN HIS HOME.

I REALIZE MY ROOM HAS AN EXCELLENT VIEW OF THE FIRE-WORKS, BUT...
WELL, YOU SEE... MISS NISHI, MR. SERIZAWA, AND MR. KAMEDA ARE (SUPPOSED TO BE) WATCHING THE FIREWORKS WITH ME, SO... SORRY...
WHAA-AAAT?
REALLY?
NICOLA PIZZA
WHAT NOW?!
DING DONG!
SMALL...? THIS ISN'T ENOUGH FOR FOUR PEOPLE...
NOW... LEAVE BEFORE THE OTHER TEACHERS COME... OKAY?
SEE?! THIS PIZZA IS THE PROOF!

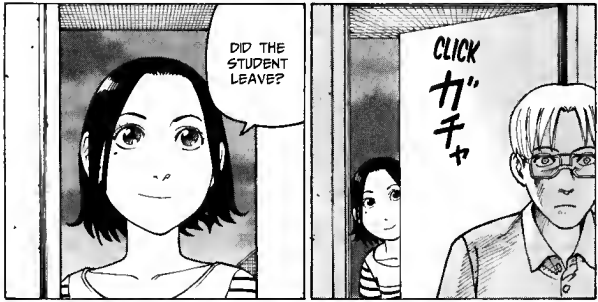
SHIVER
ゾオー!!
OR ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALONE WITH MISS NISHI?
WILL IT BE THE FOUR OF YOU HERE?

FINE. I GET IT. LET ME USE YOUR RESTROOM FIRST.
GEEZ.
SO LEAVE!!
THERE'S A LOT MORE FOOD TO COME!!

WHEW…
KAMONOHASHI
パタン
SLAM

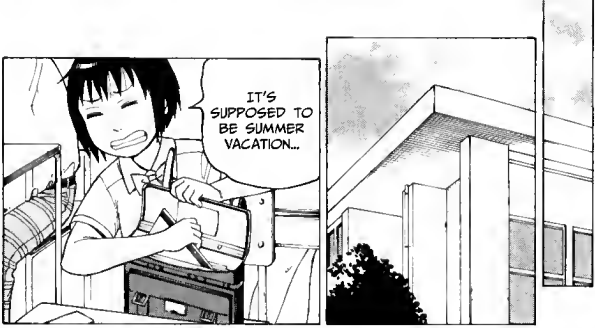
I JUST WANT TO LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEFUL LIFE AS A TEACHER..
WHAT AM I DOING ...?!
THEN I USED MISS NISHI TO GET RID OF ARASHIYAMA...
SIGH. I USED ARASHIYAMA TO GET RID OF MISS NISHI.
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?!!
HELP—!!
NO!! I HAVEN'T FLUSHED YET, AND I'M NOT WEARING ANY PANTS!
OPEN THE DOOR!!
ガチャ ガチャ RATTLE RATTLE
I PRESSED THE WRONG BUTTON WHEN I TRIED TO FLUSH...
TH-THE WATER ...!
ビビビ BEEP BEEP BEEP

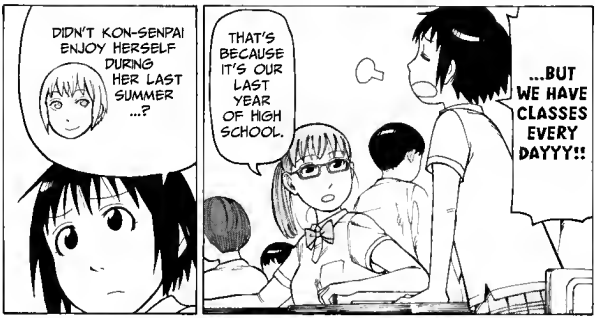
SORRY ABOUT...
...ALL THE TROU-BLE.
WELL, I'LL SEE YOU AT SCHOOL.

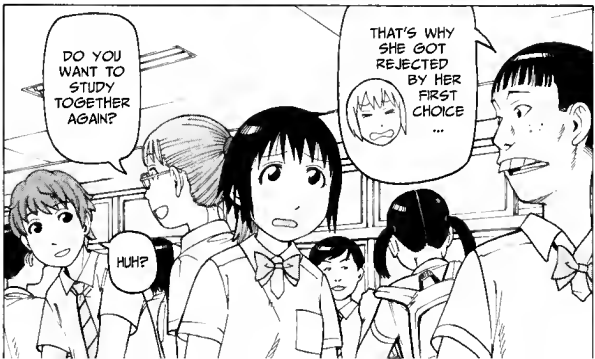

DID THE STUDENT LEAVE?
CLICK
ガチャ

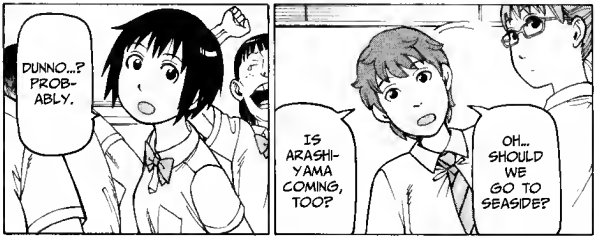
I THOUGHT I MIGHT WATCH THE FIREWORKS FROM HERE.
MISS NISHI... YOU WERE WAITING ON THE STAIRS?

THE FIRE-WORKS ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE.
COME ON IN.

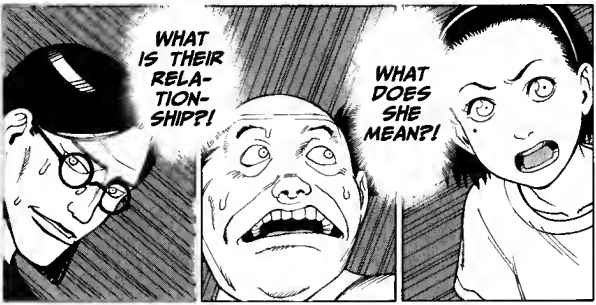

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SUMMER VACATION...

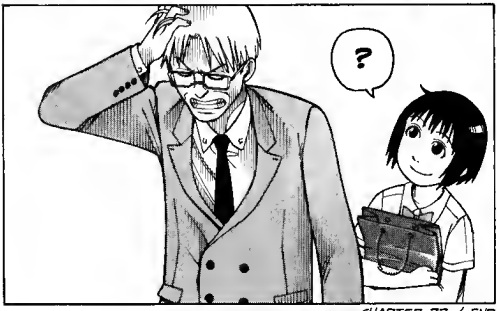

DIDN'T KON-SENPAI ENJOY HERSELF DURING HER LAST SUMMER ...?
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S OUR LAST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.
...BUT WE HAVE CLASSES EVERY DAYYY!!


DO YOU WANT TO STUDY TOGETHER AGAIN?
THAT'S WHY SHE GOT REJECTED BY HER FIRST CHOICE ...
HUH?



SIGN: FACULTY OFFICE





CHAPTER 73 / END

AFTERWORD

WHEN I FIRST STARTED VOLUME 9, I WANTED TO FOCUS ON THE THEME OF HOPE AND EXPECTATION, BUT AFTER THREE CHAPTERS OR SO, I REALIZED THAT WHEN EXPECTATIONS AREN'T MET, YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HUMOR. I JUST NOW REALIZED THIS, AFTER ALL THE TIME I'VE SPENT WRITING COMEDY! SO VOLUME 9 ENDED UP NOT REALLY HAVING A THEME.

FOR THE NEXT VOLUME, VOLUME 10, I PLAN ON PURSUING THE THEME OF RELATIONSHIPS. PERHAPS THIS WILL BE ANOTHER EXPECTATION THAT ISN'T MET...

MOVING BACK TO VOLUME 9, "THE GHOST OF RI-CHAN THE LIAR" WAS BASED ON A STRANGE EXPERIENCE I HAD. WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY GRANDMOTHER TOOK ME TO A HOUSE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS WHERE I WAS GIVEN BOTAMOCHI. IT WAS A LARGE BUILDING, AND WE HAD TO WAIT A WHILE BEFORE RECEIVING A BOX OF BOTAMOCHI. BUT WHERE WAS THAT...?

MY YOUNGER BROTHER ALSO HAD A STRANGE EXPERIENCE. HE WAS PUSHED INTO ATTENDING THE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR A GIRL HE DIDN'T KNOW. AND HE DIDN'T KNOW THE WAY HOME, SO HE WANDERED AROUND UNTIL OUR DAD WENT OUT TO FIND HIM...

I'M SURE THAT NEITHER OF THESE EXPERIENCES WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT IF WE HAD THE ANSWERS, BUT IT'S RATHER UNSETTLING WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHY SOMETHING HAPPENED.

...AND I JUST REMEMBERED THAT I ALREADY USED THIS TOPIC FOR "A BOWL OF MACHINE SODA" IN VOLUME 4.

BOTAMOCHI: A CONFECTION CONSISTING OF A RICEBALL COVERED IN SWEET RED BEAN PASTE.

ASSISTANT *NAGAHORI KAORU*

HELPER *ARI*